

T H E
CHINESE SPY;

O R,
E'MISSARY from the Court of
P E K I N,

Commissioned to examine into
THE PRESENT STATE OF EUROPE.

Translated from the CHINESE.

In SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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CHIEF OF POLICE

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

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THE
CHINESE SPY.

LETTER I.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Kié-tou-na, at Peking.

Paris.

THE measure of population is so small in France, as scarce to contain two thirds of the nation: of twenty-five millions of inhabitants, which this monarchy should have, there are scarce sixteen: and, for any care the government takes, even these may be much reduced. So many causes concur

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to

to depopulation, that did not the climate supply France with men, it would be totally destitute: happily, nature here vegetates on every side; otherwise, the country would be a desert. The natives of France may be said to be rather the offspring of the climate, than the children of the community.

Religion and politics here seem to concur in the ruin of the species; the worship is every day diminishing it.

Five hundred thousand of each sex, burying themselves, and consequently all their posterity, in convents, destroy, every century, the thirtieth part of the nation: so that the general extinction may be calculated before-hand; and it may be geometrically proved, that, in three thousand years, there will not be a single native of France on the earth.

Religion itself conspires against the state, and makes the government commit treason against mankind; I might say, against the Deity.

It is a scandal to human reason for men to conceive, that, to be eternally happy in heaven, one must be a steril burthen to the earth, and suppress the production of that issue which nature has implanted in us.

How



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How could it ever come into a man's thoughts, that the Supreme Being was honoured in the extinction of his creatures, and that his greatness consisted in the destruction of his work ?

The unity of religion cuts the sinews of population : Christ's mystical body thins France's real body. It is as if God, after his resurrection, became man to put an end to mankind.

It is the king's pleasure that all, who are for having children, shall be of his communion : so that those French, who cannot reconcile themselves to it, transplant their progeny to other countries.

The compulsion to be present at mass puts them on a voluntary exile ; and thus they go and live and die in other climates.

LETTER II.

The Same, to the Same, at Peking.

Paris.

FRANCE is full of laws, regulations, and ordinances ; every thing of advantage to society is patronized ; the only article overlooked is population.

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This,

This, though the capital branch of government, is left to itself: the ministry take no manner of thought about it, as if no concern of theirs. Here births are merely casual, and the keeping up the species depends on uncertainties.

The examples of the wisest nations, in this weighty point, have not excited the attention of the French administration. There was scarce a Roman custom which the French have not borrowed, except their various encouragements of marriage.

Here a man may live unmarried, and thus with him dies all the posterity he otherwise might have had: the government calls him to no account for it, nor is it any blemish in his character to have declined the legal way of giving children to the state.

The state of celibacy puts an end to the existence of a whole generation; yet a person in that state is capable of holding the most eminent posts of the empire; his inutility subjects him to no fine, or disadvantage.

Indeed, the king who reigned about the middle of last century allowed a pension to every father of twelve male children.

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dren. This was beginning the encouragement where it should have ended. Though generation was a proper subject for reward, men were not to be stimulated to prodigies. Every man who marries may promise himself two or three children, but is not to expect the number to which the reward is assigned.

L E T T E R I I I .

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

FOR propagation to have its full activity, men should be spread at certain distances from one another: a geometrical distribution seems of absolute necessity; for all the parts of generation should be correspondent and analogous. If divided by separate branches, it will want that general play, whence results the elasticity of all its springs. In this last case, the propagation of a people may be said to be by bits and scraps.

Paris and many other of the principal cities of France are crouded with men, whilst the other parts of the kingdom are

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too thinly sown. All the principal nobility, and persons in high stations, reside at Paris the far greater part of the year; there also the rich chuse to live: and what numbers flock hither to get into business, or mend their fortunes, according to their several capacities, or views!

A very surprising circumstance is, that this Paris, which drains all France, is continually dispeopling itself: thanks to the colonies poured into it from the country, or it would become a desert. The cause of this is, that too great a number of men in one place is as detrimental to population as too few.

LETTER IV.

The Same, to the Same, at Peking.

Paris.

MORAL causes dispeople France more than the political: the depravation of manners, which here bears the name of gallantry, prevents generation. The promiscuous intercourse of the two sexes cramps propagation in both. He, who converses with many women, will
very

very seldom have many children; propagation, by being distributed, is extinguished.

In France, marriage itself thwarts the views of population. A numerous family is burthensome, and contracts the enjoyments of life. The end of marrying now is not to have children, but to have a wife and no children: this, now-a-days, is called the nuptial blessing.

Women perceive, that pregnancy wears their beauty, and that frequent child-bearing gradually impairs their charms; on this account many forbear cohabiting with their husbands: and some there are who never marry, from a fear that it will spoil their complexions.

The reigning affectation in France, of being sociable, ruins society; they visit frequently only to please the more: and this is a cast of mind contiguous to depravation. It is not to please one single woman, that men are at such pains to make themselves agreeable; their design is on many.

The consequence of this general desire is an intimacy with prostitutes: another impediment in the way of population.

The children born here of lawful marriages are so few, as scarce to balance the number of the dead ; so that the species is daily degenerating. Then the breed is so sickly, that most of them die as soon as born ; they do little more than make their appearance in the world.

Most married women in France have but one concern, which is, to be delivered. The suckling of their children does not disturb them ; this care, though the capital of all, is intrusted to nurses, who, for a small allowance, take on them to suckle children which do not belong to them.

Here is another obstacle to population, for, whilst these creatures give suck, their fecundity is at a stand.

LETTER V.

The Same, to the Same, at Peking.

Paris.

OF all the causes which diminish the human species, one of the greatest is luxury ; it enervates, in some measure, the general population. Thou wilt perhaps scarcely believe it, but war, pestilence, and

and famine, put together, do not so much mischief as luxury.

Since it has come to pervade all classes, few can afford to marry, or, if married, are not able to get children. Cloaths, diamonds, and ornaments, anticipate the extinction of posterity.

Every appendage to this luxury hurts population. It must have a great number of men and maid servants; these seldom or never marry; which makes an immense void in the species.

A man with an income of forty thousand livres every year hinders twenty births. There is not a woman of any rank in France without four or five damsels about her, who grow old, and die without issue. What an immense loss to society is this prodigious number of both sexes, who live in a state of celibacy!

The soldiers in France, who outnumber even the footmen, never marry. They who contribute to the glory of the crown, are not allowed to contribute to the power of the state. This class of men, which perishes by battles, and still more by hardships and distresses, and which stands in need of being renewed every

twenty years, quits the stage of life without leaving any posterity to replace it.

As a concurrence of causes hinders the birth of men, so an infamous distemper hastens their death. Debauchery has spread its venom through all classes; it has weakened nature to such a degree, that it now produces only sickly creatures, mostly incapable of propagation. Fathers infect their issue, and these transmit it to posterity. This disease may be found in persons who have not deserved it; it may be the consequence of their parents vices.

LETTER VI.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

THE domestic œconomy in France is not less hurtful to population than the political.

The law of each particular family checks the general propagation. Sons are not allowed to give the commonwealth children without their fathers consent; otherwise, the marriages may be annulled. Children are not at liberty to engender

engender till the age of twenty-five ; that is, when most of them are no longer able, and after losing their most prolific years.

The Europeans, who are for reducing every thing to numbers, have calculated, that the life of man, taken in general, is but twenty years, one with another. At this rate it may be said, that in France no body is to engender till three years after his death.

This law, by which fathers dispose of their children's desires, is of the very worst consequence to population. I mean marriages in which inclination has no share ; for parents only mind the fortune, without any regard to inclinations or temper.

Disproportion of age is overlooked, provided there be a proportion of wealth. It is nothing uncommon in France to see a man of five and twenty married to a woman of five and forty ; that is, when she is almost past child-bearing.

Riches are the *primum mobile* in marriage : ugliness and aversion, which commonly attend them, scarce come into account. Hence it is that these conjunctions in general yield so few children to the state.

Another

Another inconveniency of this despotism of parents is, that a father with six children intends only one for the marriage state; for the others, there is the army, or they are condemned to celibacy; which is no more nor less than by his own private authority to destroy five generations for the sake of one. If he has four daughters, three of them he shuts up in a convent, and the fourth shall have a husband.

What can be thought of a government, which seems not to know that children belong to the republic more than to their fathers? for, though they owe their lives to the latter; for their safety, without which their life would have little to recommend it, they are indebted to the former.

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LETTER VII.

*The Same, to the Mandarin Cotao-yu-se, at
Pekin.*

Paris.

IT was lately reported, that the favourite slave had been disgraced, and that there was a vacancy in the little apartments of Versailles. Immediately all the pretty women in Paris were on the wing. Thou canst not conceive the bustle on this occasion. All that art and nature can employ in that sex, to stimulate the taste of the other, was put in practice; it occasioned a flood of business: the milliners, and all the dealers in ornaments, sat up whole nights: never was there such a demand for silks, laces, ribbands, and pompoons. It was as if all the women were widows, getting ready for a second marriage. They bathed and perfumed themselves; and, to the embellishments of dress, they were for adding wit; they read over and over the most tender and affecting passages of romances, studied repartees, and made extemporary compositions.

Till

Till the report of the downfall of this favourite, all the women at Paris had been as well as could be, but now are seized with a dreadful head-ach, which sends them to Versailles for change of air.

Some, who knew that the first interview between the king and the disgraced slave happened at a stag-hunting, would, by all means, be present at such a chace, which before they had never thought of.

Several young widows, who, since the deaths of their husbands, had betaken themselves to convents, with a design of ending their days in those devout recesses, left them, on this vacancy, to go and see Versailles once more before they totally sequestered themselves from the world.

The main point was, to be seen by the monarch, and to speak to him. For this end, they had recourse to the usual expedient of petitions. This stratagem had answered very well in the preceding reign : a petition delivered to the king by a widow, only for a pension of fifteen hundred livres, gained her the crown of France. All these love-letters, as I may call them,

to the monarch, began thus: *May it please your majesty.*

The petitioners were set off so sprucely, that, with their roguish looks, they might well have hopes of going farther than their petitions: but, in the midst of all their trepidations, it became known, that so far from a vacancy, the favourite was never more in the king's good graces. There was now no more writing of petitions, and, the head-ach suddenly leaving them, they returned with heavy hearts to Paris.

They, who had been so eager for seeing a stag-hunting, had now other thoughts; and the young widows crept away to their convents till farther call.

This is very far from being the first of such reports; some say, it is the favourite herself who is the original author of them, and afterwards makes a jest of them with the king: a sure sign that she is well fixed, else she would hardly sport thus with royal favour.

LETTER VIII.

*The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at
Pekin.*

Paris.

A Person was lately put to death here for some pasquinades being found in his house. These are writings against the government, set up by mal-contents at the corners of streets, to inform the public of what they already know.

In France, this crime is never pardoned, as it exposes a defect in the general management of affairs, or some particular fault in the ministry.

Other crimes admit of alleviations; not this: all the severity of the law is exerted against it.

Public robbers, assassins, and incendiaries, come off with the gallies; but a pasquinade-maker has nothing to expect but death.

An Englishman at Paris, growing out of conceit with life, and having not resolution enough to dispatch himself, asked a Frenchman, how he should get himself

himself put to death.—Only make a pasquinade, and that will do your business; you may depend upon being hanged.

Representations to the ministry on the bad state of affairs are considered as pasquinades, and punished as such; because, say these gentlemen, it is not for private persons to pry into public mismanagements. The tax-gatherers then should be discarded; these posts being instituted only to remedy those disorders, which they make their particular concern.

It is the same with remonstrances to the king; they are high treason in the strictest sense, and ruin the subject irretrievably; which is just as if a father of a family should put his children to death, for taking the liberty of laying open to him the bad condition of his domestic concerns.

If any private person has the spirit to give a written information to the king, the whole ministerial tribe are in a panic; they dread the king's being informed of the mismanagement of things, and lest some state-mystery be exposed to him: accordingly they take care that few or no such memorials ever reach him; it would be over with them should the sovereign be induced, by any patriotic remonstrance,

remonstrance, to look into the administration. It is but t'other day that I saw a person dragged to the Bastile for having about him some papers containing remonstrances to the king: it is indeed a most seditious piece. I send thee a copy, that thou thyself mayest judge of it.

“ Humble remonstrances to Lewis XV.
“ king of France, by the most faithful
“ of his subjects.

“ S I R E,

“ If kings be fathers of the people,
“ the people must be permitted to apply
“ to their king; for otherwise what
“ refuge have they in their calamities?
“ the ministers? How! those merciless oppressive
“ men, who sacrifice every thing
“ to ambition, and who have a personal
“ interest to conceal from the prince
“ what is amiss in the state!

“ Peter the Great, emperor of Muscovy,
“ allowed his subjects, when aggrieved,
“ to remonstrate their case to him,
“ on this proviso, that, if what they
“ advanced was not really true, death
“ would be their punishment. I here
“ submit myself to that law; I offer to die
“ if

“ if I impose on your majesty in any
“ one thing.

“ Yet, Sire, I do not violate the laws
“ of the monarchy: your great grand-
“ father, of glorious memory, allowed his
“ subjects to apply to him. The prince
“ himself opened a way for them to the
“ throne, and made an avenue for their
“ having access to his presence.

“ Before I come to the point, I must
“ acquaint you, Sire, that you are adored
“ by your people: your excellent quali-
“ ties have gained you universal good-
“ will; your clemency, your affability,
“ the assemblage of noble and amia-
“ ble virtues in your person, have made
“ due impression on the hearts of all your
“ subjects. There is not one who is not
“ ready to shed the very last drop of his
“ blood for you.

“ The only complaint is, that under the
“ best of kings the French are the most
“ unhappy of all people.

“ The misfortunes of nations arise from
“ sovereigns not knowing the state of
“ things. Those, whom they make choice
“ of to assist them in supporting the
“ weight of their crown, have always
“ particular

“ particular reasons for keeping them in
“ the dark ; and of their real strength and
“ revenues they are most ignorant.

“ Providence, Sire, has placed you on a
“ throne made to be the most powerful
“ in the universe : you reign over im-
“ mense tracts ; but this vast body politic
“ has lost the use of most of its limbs.
“ Of this large continent only a very small
“ portion is cultivated ; all the remainder
“ lies fallow : you stand in need of ten
“ millions of subjects, which, by the
“ want of laws for agriculture, are not
“ come into being. Each generation kills
“ a million of French. That is, France,
“ which should be the most potent state in
“ the world, is not proportionably on a
“ level with the weakest in Europe.

“ Your finances are in no better con-
“ dition ; or, to speak the truth, such is
“ the disorder and mismanagement of
“ the revenue, that nothing, but a miracle
“ in œconomy, can retrieve it. And
“ how is it possible, Sire, that it should
“ be otherwise ? This part of the adminis-
“ tration seems to be given up to plun-
“ der : every financier has a key to your
“ treasury, and draws from it at discre-
“ tion.

“ The

“ The total of the current specie in
 “ France is computed at twelve hundred
 “ millions. Now, for the finances to be
 “ on a right footing, this sum should be
 “ divided geometrically, that is, in propor-
 “ tion to the number of inhabitants: yet I
 “ could name six persons, who conjunctly
 “ are possessed of four hundred mil-
 “ lions; that is, they have a third part of
 “ the whole wealth of the nation, or the
 “ shares of six millions of your other sub-
 “ jects, whilst great numbers of these have
 “ never so much as seen your image on a
 “ piece of gold.

“ This universal distress is accompanied
 “ with a general discontent. France is
 “ rankled to see a set of men fattening
 “ on the public distresses. Sixty con-
 “ tracters have their hands continually in
 “ the pockets of your other subjects, and
 “ every year each of those leaches draws
 “ no less than three hundred thousand
 “ livres out of them.

“ The unnecessary wars, which wise
 “ councils might have prevented, strip
 “ your people of what little the avidity of
 “ farmers hath left them. We sink un-
 “ der the accumulated taxes for defraying
 “ the

“ the expences of romantic wars. Mul-
“ titudes being utterly unable to pay such
“ impositions, and meeting with no com-
“ passion from those who gather them,
“ quit their homes to go and seek a live-
“ lihood in some other country : this is a
“ double evil, diminishing the national
“ strength, and augmenting that of your
“ enemies. The present war has reduced
“ the state to absolute desolation, and not
“ one of your ministers has had the cou-
“ rage to lay it before you. The lands
“ have scarce any husbandmen, the cul-
“ tivators have perished in the wars, the
“ country is reduced to the appearance
“ of a desert, and the towns are bare of
“ inhabitants ; your people are desti-
“ tute of the very necessaries of nature,
“ they have not so much as bread : yes,
“ Sire, several thousands of your subjects,
“ I say, are obliged to feed on herbage,
“ like the beasts of the field.

“ This misery is the more grievous as
“ they, from whom it arises, so far from
“ taking measures to relieve it, are daily
“ adding to a yoke already so galling.

“ Such, Sire, is the affection we bear
“ you, that we should patiently sit down
“ under

“ under our afflictions, were it not for
 “ an evil still greater than our afflictions ;
 “ I mean, the despotism of your ministers,
 “ who assume an absolute power over our
 “ lives and liberties : they are the very
 “ bashaws of France, imprisoning and ill
 “ treating those of your subjects with
 “ whom they are displeased. The prisons
 “ now swarm with Frenchmen, whose
 “ names never reached your majesty’s
 “ ears.

“ They practise violences of all kinds
 “ on us, under your authority. Your
 “ name, once so sweet and pleasing, is
 “ become a terror. Persons, whose con-
 “ duct cannot be suspected, are dragged
 “ to prison for no other cause, than be-
 “ ing disagreeable to a placeman, or even
 “ one of his creatures.

“ Our only comfort, Sire, in our cala-
 “ mities, is that all these grievances are
 “ unknown to you, and committed with-
 “ out your privity ; though our wretch-
 “ edness is not the less for being un-
 “ known to you.

“ Should these most humble remon-
 “ strances come to your hands, numbers
 “ of your faithful subjects join in an ear-
 “ nest request, that you will be pleased
 “ to

“ to appoint an extraordinary commission
 “ for inquiring into the present state of
 “ France, and that, on their report, your
 “ majesty will order such remedies to be
 “ used, as the situation of things will
 “ admit of.”

L E T T E R IX.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

THE subject of this letter is of a piece with my last: there is a talk of *indicative prisons*; the plan is clever, and so agreeable to the French government, that I make no doubt of its taking place, from the countenance this ministry ever gives to excellent institutions. The author is unknown, and I believe it will be best for him to keep himself so, otherwise he would very likely hanſel his institution.

The memorial is directed to the first keeper of the prisons; that is, the minister who issues the *letters de cachet*.

“ MY LORD,

“ The subjects of the most christian
 “ king justly complain, that they are
 “ every

“ every day taken up, without knowing
 “ why or wherefore; that the inquisition
 “ of this monarchy is no less dreadful than
 “ that of Spain: it is some comfort to a
 “ delinquent, on his being taken into
 “ custody, to know the cause of his de-
 “ tention.

“ In France all crimes are huddled to-
 “ gether in one and the same prison; which
 “ is productive of much confusion, both
 “ as to persons and things. For the pre-
 “ vention of the mistakes and errors ari-
 “ sing from this confusion, I would pro-
 “ pose *indicative* prisons; over the doors
 “ of which should be inscriptions, in
 “ large characters, containing the names
 “ of the persons in favour, who have been
 “ injured. *The Marchioness's prison; His*
 “ *excellency the abbé de Breuil's prison; The*
 “ *count St. Florentine's prison; The secreta-*
 “ *ries of state's prison; The commissioners*
 “ *prison.*

“ Some small places of confinement
 “ should also be built for offences against
 “ under-secretaries, agents, clerks, foot-
 “ men, or chambermaids, to the above
 “ eminent personages. As to a king's
 “ prison, that would be quite needless,

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“ no body being ever taken up on his
 “ account. It would also be proper to
 “ have another inscription, specifying the
 “ particular treasons for which the delin-
 “ quents are confined; as, *Prisoners of state*
 “ *for speaking ill of the lady marchioness;*
 “ *Prisoners for high treason, having written*
 “ *verses against her; Prisoners for writing*
 “ *songs against the government; Prisoners*
 “ *for singing songs against the government;*
 “ *Prisoners for setting songs against the go-*
 “ *vernment to music, &c.”*

LETTER X.

*The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin
 Cham-pi-pi, at Paris.*

Venice.

A Great contest happened lately in this republic, between two parties; and it was carried on a long time with much heat and animosity: the question was nothing less than, whether three men should have the disposal of the freedom and lives of the subjects?

The history of Europe does not afford a single instance of any people granting
 so

so absolute an authority to any three persons, as those here called the state-inquirers. It is only in Turkey that a power can be met with answerable to this tribunal.

In all free governments it has been a constant maxim, not to lodge too great a power in a small body of men; for, as an Italian * politician well observes, *a few are corrupted with little.*

The republic of Venice indeed seems to have particular reasons for such an institution. The noble families being very numerous, and some very powerful, who might form designs against the state, a severe tribunal seems expedient for overawing them, or speedily forcing them to keep within the limits of the established subordination. But wretched is that government which stands in need of such an instrument.

Two circumstances chiefly render this tribunal odious, the want of formalities, and the extent of its power.

Some clandestine informations go for authentic proofs in cases of high treason. Here is no confronting of witnesses; the persons accused on such bare informations

C 2

are

* Probably Machiavel.

are put to death, without seeing, or knowing, their accusers.

Three men meet in a dark chamber, and there, after some short consultation, send and take up the chief men of the state, and away with them to prison.

The first is contrary to the general right of every member of society, whose liberty, in a great measure, lies in the formalities of the law.

The second is against the right of the nobles, who, as the republic's eldest sons, should not be exposed to the animosity of three individuals.

A person, after a worthy discharge of the chief offices of the state, and rendering important services to his country, ought to be safe in his house; he should be distinguished from the worthless and inactive; it is a reward due from the state to his virtue. This exception from the general rule is necessary, and equality herein may be detrimental.

All republics produce mean-spirited creatures, to whom distinguished capacity is an eye-sore. A person's worth draws their enmity on him; they cannot be reconciled to his superior abilities. Such citizens are to be secured from envy. If a
great

great man after distinguishing himself by eminent services in the state, happen to commit a slip, he is to be proceeded against with more circumspection than a common citizen: the republic itself should try him, and not any particular court; the life and freedom of citizens should not be left to the arbitrary decision of a few judges.

A republic, investing a petty court with the power of definitive sentences, is not safe. Three judges are easily susceptible of prepossession; and, to corrupt them, it is only a few families joining interest, and they may be sure of their point. For the public to be easy under such a tribunal, it must suppose that these three persons, to whom such a power is delegated, will not make an ill use of it; that they will divest themselves of all human considerations; that nothing will prevail with them to abuse their office; in a word, that instead of men they will be angels.

Experience every day manifests, that three magistrates are not sufficient for seeing clearly into certain state-affairs, especially when a delinquent of eminence is to be punished; for usually they, who have plotted his ruin, take precautions,

before-hand, which cannot be detected by a small number of judges. On this account it is, that, in all free governments, the defendant has a right of appeal from the sentence of a common court to a higher.

But to return to the above-mentioned debate, it was decided, by a majority of votes, that the three state-inquisitors should be the bashaws of the republic, as before. In disputes concerning the power of bodies, it is usual to recur to the origin of them; and here the power of the state-inquisitors was discovered to be a corruption of the constitution, and not a necessary appendix to it. Such a discovery, which naturally should have opened the eyes of the republic, only served to make her shut them the closer. It was carried in favour of the inquisitors; and, by this act, that which before was only a concession, became a law.

LETTER XI.

*The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin
Cotao-yu-fe, at Pekin.*

Paris.

FRENCH writers are very diffuse about the several tribunals established by the legislature; yet not one makes mention of the toilette-tribunal, of all the most absolute, and where state-affairs are every day determined without appeal. The king himself is subject to its decrees, and its decisions are the supreme law.

In this court courage and intrepidity are disregarded; officers, who have cheerfully gone on the hottest attacks, are often confuted, and quite out of countenance; austere judges, who have made a whole court tremble, are seen labouring under the like timid sensations.

Of all the ingredients appertaining to the toilette-tribunals, *the white and red* are those, of which the power is most absolute, and the decrees the most tyrannical. The Justinian code is of much less force.

The patch-box has also a great ascendant there. The patches are small black spots of a wonderful influence. Some of these corpuscles, artfully placed on a woman's face, often pronounce irrevocable decrees. I have seen the tombs of several foplings, whose death was owing to patches almost imperceptible; for the smaller the atom, the greater the execution.

The power of this tribunal is not seen in its full force, till the rising of the court, when art has put the finishing hand to nature, and all the batteries of charms are planted: then he, who happens to meet such a face, falls a victim to it. Perhaps thou smilest at this as trivial; but I must tell thee, that the French make a very serious business of it.

L E T.

LETTER XII.

*The Same, to the Superintendent of Religion
at Pekin.*

Paris.

A Great difficulty in the christian religion is, to distinguish those sins, which put God in a passion, from those which only put him out of humour; I mean, deadly sins from venial. This is the particular business of a great number of doctors, called casuists. Of these every convent has one, and he has nothing to do but to eat and drink, and ruminate on the different ways of damning one's self.

Besides the regular casuists, there are other seculars, who offer their services occasionally; they are consulted in all cases of conscience. By them a christian, who has offended the Deity, is informed of the degree of his guilt: this he knows nothing of till told by the casuists.

These doctors may be looked on as the thermometers of consciences, indicating their degree of reprobation. They, properly, are the judges of Christ's law;

their office empowers them to give it what turn they please.

These profound divines are of great use to society; they can quiet souls, which otherwise would be strangely disturbed. The only difficulty is, that they do not agree among themselves on what is technically called *the gravity of cases*. Some are so difficult as to admit of no temperment; twenty casuists may be tried, before meeting with one who will allow you to offend God without remorse. Some there are indeed very tractable and indulgent.

• The sentences of this tribunal are given gratis; the casuists make no sale of them, condescending only to let them be purchased by presents.

This office is very much declined, since several false brethren have laid open the science of souls. Formerly cases of conscience were a secret, but the printing of them has made them matters of common knowledge. Sinners now peruse them in a large dictionary, where they are placed in alphabetical order. This was a home stroke to the casuists, as now they are little wanted. For instance, under the letter B, are found all the sins relating to bigotry, bestiality, &c. in C, whatever

whatever relates to continence and concubinage; under F, the particulars of fornication; under L, love in all its branches; and the like, to the last letter of the alphabet. At present there is not a sinner of any discretion, who, among his books of impiety, has not a dictionary of cases of conscience.

But, before casuistry was thus laid open, the professors had met with a very considerable loss. The kings of France formerly used to ask their leave to be unjust; they consulted them on the means of usurping states with a safe conscience: this was very convenient for those monarchs, as warranting them in a tranquil pursuit of their ambition. In time, however, these doctors come to be thought of no necessity, and were dismissed. At present, their customers are commonly weak timorous men, fluctuating between hope and fear, desirous of obtaining the felicity of heaven, without relinquishing the pleasures of the earth.

The casuists, with a view of recovering their trade, brought on the carpet, some time ago, a striking project; it was, to prove to a very powerful set of men, called financiers, that their enormous
wealth

wealth was wrongfully acquired, and that there was no paradise for them, without refunding. This was a notable push, and would have gained them great consideration throughout the whole kingdom, but, unluckily for the doctors, the financiers mind neither God nor devil; all their faith and casuistry lie in their money.

LETTER XIII.

*The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na,
at Pekin.*

Paris.

I Was lately at a house, where two politicians were canvassing the present war. "What a heap of difficulties are
" to be levelled, (said one) to come at a
" general peace! Kingdoms destroyed,
" territories ravaged, vast continents
" shifting masters, &c. Yet a general congress is talked of: but how to go about
" it? how is the work of a general pacification to be taken in hand?"

" I am far from denying, (replied the
" other) but that the obstacles are great
" and

“ and many. You may say what you
 “ please; but for my part, who know
 “ the temper of negociators, I am not
 “ so much afraid of the interests of prin-
 “ ces, as those of their ministers. Should
 “ the congress so much talked of take
 “ place, what would be the result of it?
 “ Why, the plenipotentiaries will meet,
 “ visit one another, talk together, wran-
 “ gle and break up.

“ It is usual for these gentlemen to fol-
 “ low, step by step, the progress of their
 “ masters arms: when successful, they
 “ swell with insupportable pride. *We*
 “ *have a powerful army to check your de-*
 “ *signs*, says the haughty plenipotentiary
 “ of a superior prince to the agent of the
 “ weaker; *we'll lay waste your whole coun-*
 “ *try, we'll destroy every thing by fire and*
 “ *sword*. This is their common lan-
 “ guage: not to mention, that negotia-
 “ tors are something while the war lasts;
 “ whereas, on the signature of the peace,
 “ they become of no account.

“ Though sovereigns should happen
 “ to be well disposed, and earnestly wish
 “ for a general pacification, that will not
 “ do, unless their ministers are in the
 “ like sentiments. It signifies nothing
 “ for

“ for kings to give them written instructions. If no debates arise concerning the interests of princes, they will make a handle of precedency and rank ; a bench, the placing of a stool, shall very often break off a negociation highly beneficial to all Europe, and bring the armies of all nations into the field again.

“ *I demand an easy chair, says a scoundrel of a plenipotentiary. My chair is out of its rank ; before I listen to any proposal of peace I insist on my place ; all the nations in Europe may perish, rather than I will bear any injury to the rights of the crown which I represent. What is the right of nations, and the laws of war, to my master's prerogatives ?*

“ If these difficulties should happen to be removed, they soon start others. I defy all the powers of the earth, with all their good intentions, to give peace to Europe, if two or three rascally ministers, colluding together at a congress, are for prolonging the war.”

LETTER XIV.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

OUR ministers, said a Frenchman lately to me, are the causes of all our misfortunes. Their history is that of the decline of the monarchy.

Richlieu, who governed us above a hundred years ago, was an ambitious creature, centering every thing in himself. Never had subject a greater sway over his master. He may be said to have dethroned Lewis XIII. and to have seated himself in his place. He, indeed, did great things; but those great things were what should not have been done.

He established an absolute despotism in France: since that time the nation has never done any thing great; for what is to be expected from slaves?

Before him, there was a power in the state, which was a counterpoise to the royalty of our kings, and hindered them from being the absolute masters of our lives and properties; but Richlieu suppressed it.

it. This cardinal would have been one of the most famous bashaws of the Ottoman empire ; for never was a greater promoter of absolute power. All the political societies, which might in any wise be a check to the royal prerogative, he made it his study to abolish ; and, as an author very justly remarks of this man, *had he not had despotism in his heart, he would have had it in his head.*

He was a bitter enemy to the house of Austria, and spent his life in scheming ways for diminishing its power ; at the same time overlooking a little republican state, then intent on forming a navy, which one day was to be severely felt by France. He used to be writing plays, when he should have been employed about building ships.

Mazarine succeeded him, a true Italian, cunning and deceitful, besides his rapacity in stripping the state of its riches, and appropriating them to himself. His ministry was a series of crimes. He had an army at his beck, and made war, at the expence of the state, against those who disputed his authority ; he threw the kingdom into confusion, and ruined the finances.

Fouquet,

Fouquet, who became prime minister after him, used to give entertainments to the king to the amount of sixteen millions. Fouquet was punished, but malversation still continued.

Colbert, instead of minding the substance, had his eyes fixed on forms; he raised the building before placing any scaffolding. Instead of encouraging agriculture, he promoted those arts which are no more than a consequence of it; he began at the end. His application was taken up with turning the husbandmen into artisans; he found France fallow, and left it uncultivated.

Louvois was made up of passion; his whole occupation was in revenging himself and Lewis XIV. This severe, cruel, and merciless minister, looked on mankind as the instrument of his ambition: it seemed his supreme delight to instigate his master to carnage. His administration was all bombs and cannons. When sieges and battles were in view, places were instantaneously supplied with all the murderous implements; there was not his fellow for dispeopling a monarchy.

Seignelai was too much the man of pleasure to mind the state; he was on parties

ties of debauchery when he should have been in his office.

Chamillard understood nothing of business; his blunders were perpetually hurting the nation. Charles XII. of Sweden, being informed of divisions in the senate of Stockholm, signified to them, that he would send a boot to govern them. Chamillard governed France like a boot.

Du Bois was a bad man; his debaucheries and crimes had totally unfitted him for any serious application. The procuring of loose women for the regent, his master, allowed him no time for political affairs; and, perhaps, it was a happiness to the monarchy, that his depravity had so debased his genius; for, with such an influence over him, who at that time governed France, he might otherwise have done infinite mischief.

Law, who was put at the head of the finances, was an adventurer, determined on raising himself on the ruins of the first state which would trust him. This is a specimen of our ministry's wisdom and honesty, to commit the most important part of the administration to such a foreigner. The bank was a system fit only for a republic, where the whole community

nity are securities for what is lodged in the finances; but could never answer in a state like France, where, when there is a fund giving value to paper, paper soon comes to be of no value.

Fleuri, with all the qualities which constitute an honest man, had not so much as one of those which make a great minister. His pedantic cast was incompatible with the proper management of state-affairs; he may be looked on as the school-master of France. He was too parsimonious to enrich the monarchy; he ruined it by his saving: all his views were low; he was the meanest soul that had ever occupied the body of a minister. By his niggardliness the remainder of our navy ran to ruin, when vast sums should have been laid out for its repair.

Fagon had views, but they all terminated in manufactures; like Colbert, he minded nothing but form. Manufactures were his talk by day, and dreams by night. Our placemen, for these hundred years past, think that nothing more is wanting to the prosperity of a state, than making stuffs, and encouraging arts.

Chauvelin teemed with projects; he, as it were, engendered plans, but wanted genius

genius for striking out the means of execution. He was a downright closet-minister.

Maurepas did some services to France ; he repaired the navy as much as could be, at a time when the repair was universally opposed. The continuance of the Levant trade, against all the efforts of the English, was owing to him. He set out very well, but a woman stopped him short.

I draw the veil, added he, over that flow and ebb of placemen, of whom some governed us not long since, and some still govern us ; it is the picture of the debasement of ministers. It shews petty abbés become ministers of state, and made cardinals, on account of some courtly lines and pretty sallies of wit ; sons and grandsons of painters, barbers, and woollen-drapers, without talents or virtues, promoted to the ministry by mere favour : some, from the inspection of lanterns, have passed to the controul of the marine ; others, known only among prostitutes, have had the finances committed to them ; and others, after a thousand blunders as police-officers, govern the state with the like incapacity.

L E T.

LETTER XV.

*The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin
Cham-pi-pi, at Paris.*

Venice.

NOTHING can be more plain and simple than the government of this republic. No depth of invention was requisite to the formation of it: the nobles got the political and civil power into their hands, and there it has ever since remained: this is the Venetian system.

It may, in some measure, be said to be without any constitution; for where every thing, even to the natural rights of men, is suppressed, there is properly no state.

The republic, indeed, is in action; but it is, only to restrain the power of the nobles within bounds: the ease and freedom of the people make no part of its care. It is general despotism, keeping a strict guard against particular tyranny. This is the republic's great, and almost only business.

The commons have no representative in the great council; neither should they; for, being without either rights or privileges,

leges, they can scarce be said to have any political existence.

The senate is a body by itself, not connected with the state, and subsists independently of the republic. All intermediate, subordinate, and dependent powers are abolished: the clergy, the peasantry, and the commonalty, are nothing; the nobles possess every branch of the legislative power. The same body which makes laws, enforces the execution of them, and appoints the penalties.

Some constitutional principle however there must be, and Venice is not without it: the senate, by continual shows and diversions, draws off the attention of the people from prying into the administration.

Fear, suspicion, and distrust, are the basis of this government. Venice looks on all the crowns of Europe as its secret enemies, and accounts its own ministers dangerous men. Every member of the state here is a spy over the other.

At Venice a stone mouth is open to all informers: one would think it, with a French author, to be that of tyranny. A man is not to speak to another under pain of death. What can be thought of

a go-

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a government which erects the civil virtues on the ruins of the moral, and where a good citizen must be a villain?

Talents at Venice depend on fortune; all the posts of the republic are casual; when the state is happy, it is well governed. There are indeed some dexterous gamesters, who, against all the opposition of fortune, get into posts, dignities, &c. so as to become masters of the republic, of the senate, and of the people; the result of which is, that the nobles are the tyrants of the republic, and the commonalty the slaves of the state.

LETTER XVI.

The Same, to the Same, at Paris.

Venice.

WHAT I said of Venice in my last must not lead you to think that this city is without a polity; it has a plan of government perpetuated from generation to generation. The republic was set a going about thirteen hundred years ago, and its motion is still the same. The machine of state has not been wound

wound up ever since ; some of the springs, from time to time, have occasionally been mended, and that is all.

So accustomed are they here to grievances, abuses, and defects in the administration, that, though plainly seen into, and publicly known, no remedy is applied.

If a citizen of parts proposes a beneficial scheme, he is heard and admired, and his scheme allowed to be highly advantageous to the public, but not carried into execution ; it being a standing maxim, not to admit any thing, however useful, if contrary to antient errors. The Venetian policy excludes all innovations.

I should willingly come into this system, that is, the immutability of the fundamental maxims of the state, did it not clash with the nature of the human mind.

Political societies, that is, men, have no fixed point ; they are never in the same position. A wise government, instead of valuing itself on a useless constancy, should be ever accommodating itself to such variations.

All constitutions are continually moulding themselves into new forms ; and it behoves

hoves legislation to follow them in its several gradations.

For a nation now-a-days to go about governing itself on the Greek or Roman plan would be ridiculous. Those times afforded seeds of virtues and vices which no longer subsist.

The first knowledge of a government is to distinguish times; without such a distinction every thing is confounded. Here other reflections also offer themselves.

Since the revolution which followed that of the Roman empire, Europe has been without any detached states; the several nations form but one family divided into different governments. The states, which compose the christian commonwealth, are linked together by a chain of political interests.

When great bodies change maxims, the lesser must follow their example; otherwise, there would be a breach of order in the general power.

All the governments of Europe have made alterations in their political and civil system, Venice alone excepted; it has always left things in *statu quo*.

The reason given for this is, that the republic, having subsisted fourteen centuries under this institution, bids fair to subsist as many more. But states do not totally perish, they degenerate; and this state of debility is their natural death: the Romans existed a long time after the period of their republic.

Not that Venice is without able citizens, who, as they see evils, are capable of remedying them; but every age has produced a body of men attached to ancient customs, always opposing salutary plans, from ignorance, and a senseless prejudice against any innovations whatever. These human machines, who view the republic only through the mechanism of its primary motion, are not competent judges of the advantages of new plans.

To leave things as they are requires no capacity; whereas, to reform inveterate evils is the task of great abilities; yet the old errors still subsist: the usual misfortune of those governments where the deliberations go by plurality of votes; the state being then governed, not by a few intelligent men, but by an ignorant majority.

L E T-

LETTER XVII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Prime Minister at Peking.

Paris.

EUROPE, at the time I am writing to thee, is witness to a spectacle on which the attention of the whole universe may be worthily employed.

France, that flourishing kingdom, which formerly the greatest powers could not behold without umbrage and terror, is now become an object of ridicule.

This body, once so robust and vigorous, is fallen into a decline. The crown lands are considerably diminished; its chief colonies are destroyed; it has lost the greater part of its conquests. Its population is decreased, its navy at the lowest ebb, its trade come to nothing, its finances exhausted, and its large armies ruined.

A nation is never reduced so low without some internal defect, and this defect is always in the administration; for nations do not degenerate of themselves:

D 2

they

they are in one century what they were in another; their elevation or abasement depends absolutely on those who govern them.

A sensible Frenchman said lately to some politicians, who were lamenting this general impotency: How can it be otherwise? Would not one think that there was a kind of struggle at court, to place at the head of affairs those who are least equal to them? If a man has some share of wit, and his repartees are heightened by the elegance of his person, he need no other recommendation; these accomplishments, with a little help from the women in favour, will carry him great lengths; he is made minister for foreign affairs. Another, when in the police, kept a strict eye to the order and safety of the city, and took care that the foot and horse patrol punctually did their duty: such eminent services, to be sure, call for a reward; the man is made minister of the marine department.

Another, who, when in the same office, never failed being present at the sessions of the Chatelet, has committed two or three hundred street-walkers to prison, and banished as many gamblers and pick-pocket

pockets to *Bicetre*: something must be done for so valuable a personage; accordingly he is put at the head of the finances. Thus three men, neither of whom is cut out for his post, fill the three most important stations of the monarchy; foreign affairs, the navy, and the treasury, being the main springs of our politics.

I am not ignorant, added he, that a man may be a tolerable minister of state, though no great conjurer: yet should he be thoroughly expert at business; he must know all the turnings and windings, the avenues and outlets, besides a consummate acquaintance with the interests of crowns. Now all this is not to be learned late in life, especially after the former part of our days has been spent in particulars of quite a different nature.

Wit alone will not do: without practice it rather perplexes than helps, and is a bar to proficiency in ministerial abilities. I may, perhaps, some other time reassume this subject.

L E T T E R XVIII.

*The Same, to the Mandarin Director of Arts
and Trades at Pekin.*

Paris.

I Lately went to see a vast inclosure, full of artizans, called the Gobelins, which is a royal workhouse for painting in wool. The artists draw figures as big as life, and sometimes even giants: almost all the subjects are taken from history, and may serve as monuments to future ages; so that here they may be said to strip sheep, in order to dress up posterity.

From this manufactory one may have an apartment hung from top to bottom with pitched battles, have the sight of armies, and, from morning to night, be in company with the greatest commanders in Europe.

This is rather a domestic art, formed for the luxury of the kings of France, than a general trade set up for enriching the people. All the pictures finished here belong to the crown. Presents are made of them to foreign ambassadors, that their
sovereigns

sovereigns may see to what perfection France has brought its manufactures.

Splendid as this plan is, it gives me some uneasiness when I reflect, that the moths may disfigure an emperor's face, or mangle the body of one of the principal persons in the piece; as thus the annals of the world will, in future ages, be mutilated.

The ancients, for the speedy representation of nature, invented the pencil. The Flemings, and afterwards the French, struck out this manufacture for representing it by a greater number of hands.

The art of painting is multiplied *ad infinitum*: the wool must be cleansed, spun, dressed, prepared, dyed a thousand colours, to fit it for the fabric. This may be called painting at the twelfth hand. All the foundations among the Europeans are the products of a fondness for novelty.

LETTER XIX.

*The Same, to the Mandarin Cotaoyu-se,
Censor of the Empire, at Peking.*

Paris.

THE public merriment is here an affair of state. The government leaves no stone unturned to keep the nation gay and frolicksome. The civil magistrates make a point of it. There are more ordinances relating to the opera and playhouse, than the weightiest branch of the administration. That there may be a freedom of diversion at the playhouses, and people may laugh there as much as they please, troops are posted in the entries, in order to seize any disturbers of the public joy. Harlequin has centinels at his door, as well as the king. Such are the precautions taken against seriousness at the theatre, lest it might diffuse a gloomy appearance over the whole nation, that even all hissing of dull and lifeless actors is forbid. In a word, every thing is so regulated, that there is no being
out

out of humour at the playhouse, without contravening the king's order.

The police indeed allows of yawning sometimes at the theatre, as otherwise at some pieces the audience would burst.

I cannot conceive, why the administration takes so much pains to promote the national gaiety: the French are of such a merry cast, that, instead of guards to prevent seriousness at the play, it would be sufficient to put these words over the door of every theatre in Paris, *Laughing here*, and every one would fall a laughing at his entrance.

LETTER XX.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at Pekin.

Paris.

I am of opinion, that since the revival of arts, society has much degenerated in Europe. In a climate naturally chearful people had nothing to do but to be merry from morning till night; and as there was but little reading, there must have been more talking. The theory of society has in

some measure absorbed the practice. Men are too much read, and not studied enough. The best book on the world is the world itself. The company of books is very different from that of men; one is living, the other dead: the former gives only a single perspective; the latter offers a thousand views. In a word, the first is a shadow, and the second the substance.

I see multitudes of people here, who, after long studying the world in others, are come to be quite ignorant of it. Scarce a day passes without my being shewn some mandarins of a recluse life, whose business is, to represent the manners of the age, without having any idea of it. They take from other moral writers general delineations of civil life: these they foist into their discourses; but, as to the smaller interludes of human conduct, the *minutiae* of deportment, which, ever connecting the capital scenes, form the real picture of the social world, they know nothing of them.

A general who had studied sieges and battles only in books, however correct or enlarged his theory in the art of war may be, would make but an indifferent commander. Here theory can by no means
supply

supply the want of practice; the several parts, instead of being only read behind the scenes, are to be acted on the public stage of the world.

This reproach, of all other nations of Europe, is least applicable to the French. Society in France is continually in action; the practical book of the world is so thumbed, that the leaves are almost worn away. Several parts of it are falling to pieces; people are every day tearing them, whilst others are every day putting together the fragments.

The Europeans are extreme in every thing. Some nations are deficient in sociability, whilst others run into an opposite error.

LETTER XXI.

The Same, to the Same, at Peking.

Paris.

THOU art desirous of being acquainted with the perfection to which the Europeans have brought the art of war. Know then, that time has produced

produced a great revolution in this branch of political power.

The Romans, who conquered the world, were of all things chiefly intent on perfecting military discipline; but no succeeding nation having planned an invasion of the universe, it declined greatly: not that the nations did not continue to wage war with one another; but they fought awkwardly.

For the space of fifteen hundred years there was little regularity in military carnage, till lately a German prince set an example to all the powers, of killing methodically; and his maxims are adopted.

At present, all the European troops are dressed in the Prussian way, march in the Prussian way, exercise in the Prussian way, carry their arms in the Prussian way, encamp in the Prussian way, fight in the Prussian way, live in the Prussian way, and kill one another in the Prussian way: and Frederic, who is this prince, has taught war to all sovereigns. Thou wilt readily conceive the advantage this has given him, as it is not usual for masters to be beaten.

L E T-

LETTER XXII.

*The Same, to the Mandarin Cotaoyu-se, at
Pekin.*

Paris.

IN my former letters I laid before you the luxury of the French in houses, furniture, and dress: but wouldst thou ever have imagined, that there had been a luxury of dogs, and that a creature generally troublesome is become an object of vanity?

I was lately at a gentleman's seat, who has a pack of two hundred. He himself was pleased to shew me the several curiosities of his mansion, and, among a great many marks of his splendor, did not forget his dogs.

This, said he, is a family foundation. My grandfather had fifty dogs, my father as many more; and, as good institutions should be enlarged, I keep two hundred.

Sir, said I, these creatures must cost you a great deal. No, no great matter, answered he; about as much as the giving a good education to three of my children,

or

or marrying every year half a dozen country girls: but you see, I make a more noble use of my money; for nothing distinguishes the French and English nobility like a large pack of hounds.

From his dogs he carried me to his tygers, leopards, and lions; for this gentleman's bestial luxury extends also to foreign animals.

This luxury did not spring up accidentally among private persons, but is derived from royal example. The king of France has dogs, monkies, and elephants; and this is enough to bring kennels and menageries into vogue.

LETTER XXIII.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, at Paris.

Venice.

VENICE is not cut out for sciences; entertainments and diversions take such hold of the citizens, as not to allow them leisure to be learned. They take up with a kind of ease and sprightliness not very unlike wit. Those nobles
who

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who affect the reputation of literature, have large libraries ; and this, here, implies erudition.

The stillness of schools being incompatible with the bustle of revelry and diversions, knowledge has been removed from Venice to Padua, which is thus become the *alma mater* of the learned Venetians ; but not without suspicion of suckling its nurslings with bad milk ; their mind, on leaving this seminary, being rather inflated than formed. Happily, no body here troubles himself much about the sciences ; any other knowledge than policy now being looked upon as futile and useless.

L E T T E R XXIV.

*The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin
Prime Minister at Peking.*

Paris.

THERE is a science, which the Europeans are ever studying, and never learn ; it is called the *interests of princes*. And certainly there must be some moral, or physical cause, which obstructs

structs the improvements in it; more books having been written on this topic than any other; and yet it remains unknown, as if all endeavours to throw a light on it, only rendered it more obscure. The sovereigns, who to be sure are the soul of this science, understand it so little, as generally to be mistaken; and how can that be solved for them, which they themselves cannot solve? One thing there is, in which they are never mistaken; the desire of dominion, power, and aggrandizement: their ambition they know, but not the means of satisfying it: disadvantages they take for advantages, and generally the way they open to themselves in the pursuit of greatness, leads them to abasement. There is no set of men in Europe, who stand in greater need of tutors, than kings.

The interests of princes have no fixed and permanent point; the variations are so infinite, that fancy, with all its activity, cannot trace them. An unforeseen treaty, a new alliance, an invasion, a death, a marriage, the birth of a prince, a siege, a battle, produces a total change. The former combinations are antiquated:
new

new ones must be struck out ; and these will be soon superseded by others.

In order to understand the interests of princes, they should be defined ; it should be shewn in what they consist. But, after all, the best stroke of policy concerning these interests would be to stop the wheel. Did princes once agree on this word, their procedure would be very different from what they are. It is now some centuries since the cabinets of Europe have set on foot intrigues and negotiations for knowing these interests ; and they are not yet aware, that they themselves are labouring to perplex them !

LETTER XXV.

The Same, to the Mandarin Cotao-yu-se, at Peking.

Paris.

PARIS is a mere common sewer. This city is full of ordure. Profligacy, debauchery, and infamy, run down through every part of it as a torrent. Thirty thousand courtezans rise every morning to prostitute themselves ; and by evening above sixty thousand citizens have debauched themselves with them. Thus
here

here are a hundred thousand members of the state daily corrupted. And this is not all; such a toleration authorizes other women, who have some remains of virtue, to abandon themselves to guilt; so that here incontinence is a general vice.

The reason given is, that professed courtezans are despised. But that is not sufficient; they should be banished out of society.

The courts of justice, and the chiefs of the legislative power, spend their lives in forming regulations for maintaining a good police. Now it is surprising, that it never came into their minds to make any against this vice, of all others the most pestilential to civil order, as, otherwise, the best institution must become corrupted. There are laws indeed against public licentiousness; but they are not put in execution, and that's the same thing as having none.

Did we tolerate such corruptions in China, our best laws would be to no purpose, and our government, from being the wisest in the world, would soon run to ruin. If any thing upholds that uniform order among us, which is the admiration of the

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the universe, it is the particular care taken among us to prevent debauchery. Among a multitude of causes, which hinder the prevention of these vices in France, there is one, which alone is sufficient to encourage them; I mean, that the great are the first in protecting debauchery.

Here incontinence finds an asylum at the very foot of the throne: it is not to be extirpated without making a breach on the sacred prerogative of kings; an attempt above the force of laws, and the jurisdiction of the courts erected for the maintenance of morality.

LETTER XXVI.

The Same, to the Same, at Peking.

Paris.

PARIS has diversions, at which one cannot be present without having the imagination sullied. Guilt is exhibited stark naked; they are not so much as at the pains of throwing a slight gauze over it. Such is a medley of songs and dances,

ces, called the *comic opera*, but which I look upon to be the most serious spectacle in the nation; for certainly nothing is less comic to a state, than the corruption of its manners.

Such a croud of obscenities can scarce be got together in one place, and so great a number of spectators of both sexes to hear ribaldry. This opera is never empty, and at the exhibition so thronged as almost to stand on each other's heads. The proprietors every day refuse money, so great are the numbers pressing to share in this theatrical licentiousness.

Measures have been taken for suppressing this dangerous diversion; for the French government does sometimes remember, that a people should not be totally without virtue: but still it shoots up again from its ashes, so that one would think the comic opera to be a necessary evil at Paris. I myself was carried there by the croud. As all Paris at present knows me to be a Chinese, I observed the company had their eyes fixed on me to see how I liked it; but my looks, and some motions, plainly shewed that I heartily despised it. However, the very next day the following letter was brought to me:

me : it is from an undertaker of shows, who would set up a comic opera at Pekin : I should indeed have committed it to the flames, but I send it thee to laugh at.

“ Mr. CHINESE,

“ I am the cleverest fellow in Europe
 “ for raising a company of actors, and ex-
 “ hibiting entertainments of singing and
 “ dancing. All Paris can tell you that I
 “ have done wonders this way. About
 “ twenty years ago I fleeced the city of
 “ Lions with a company of actors and ac-
 “ tresses, who were only so many moving
 “ images. I broke indeed; but that very
 “ thing is a proof of my address. I am
 “ the restorer, and in a great measure the
 “ founder, of the famous comic opera at
 “ Paris. This is one of the finest monu-
 “ ments of our age; and a statue would
 “ have been already erected to me, oppo-
 “ site the theatre of St. Lawrence’s fair,
 “ had not the loose wenches, which one
 “ cannot do without in these performan-
 “ ces, put the public more out of humour
 “ by distempers, than they had diverted
 “ it by their songs and dances. This a
 “ little affected my fame, and has hitherto
 “ suspended the sculptor’s chissell.

“ I am

“ I am possessed of another superior talent ; I carry on theatrical enterprizes without money. I was quite penniless, when, about twelve years ago, I raised a company to go for England, and prevailed on twenty actors to cross the seas without giving them a farthing. Now, Mr. Chinese, did you know the eagerness of our players after money, you would look on this passage of my life as a prodigy of dexterity. Indeed, some time after my arrival in Great-Britain, these scoundrels took the law of me, and had me thrown into prison : still I had duped their avarice, by drawing them in so far as to cross the seas.

“ My views have always been general : on the period of my English scheme, I was for erecting a French playhouse in America, but dropped it on being assured that the savages of those countries had no taste for dramatic exhibitions.

“ I then turned my eyes towards Japan, and was actually collecting a troop, with a full resolution to undertake the voyage. Here again a Dutchman informed me, that there we should all be burnt, from an apprehension of
“ the

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" the government, that French comedians
 " might introduce the christian religion
 " into the empire. Stupid creatures !
 " they must know little indeed of our
 " actors and actresses : it would rather
 " be an effectual way for keeping it out.
 " Being informed, that the emperor of
 " China encourages arts, and is particu-
 " larly fond of public spectacles, I would,
 " by your means, propose to your court
 " the erection of a French theatre at Pe-
 " kin, for acting comic operas twice a
 " week ; such as, *The Servant Mistress*, *The*
 " *Village-Cock*, *Blaze the Cobbler*, and other
 " pieces ; with which the emperor, and
 " the Chinese people, would be highly
 " diverted. Some difficulty, perhaps,
 " might be made about the language ;
 " but I have acted *Timon the Man-bater*,
 " *The Plague of Riches*, and *The Prodigal*
 " *Lovers*, at London, before Englishmen
 " who knew nothing of French, and
 " seemed nevertheless to understand every
 " word. If you will promote this scheme,
 " and bring the emperor to erect a French
 " playhouse in the capital of his empire,
 " I will give you and your wives tickets
 " to come in for nothing, during the
 " whole time it shall continue.

" I ask

“ I ask no money before-hand; all I
 “ desire is, that you will furnish me with
 “ a hundred thousand crowns, for the
 “ charges of the voyage.”

L E T T E R XXVII.

*The Same, to the Mandarin Director of
 Trade, at Peking.*

Paris.

HERE are men, called bankers, who make themselves servants to the mercantile class: all the business of these folks is to be paying money; they are the public cashiers of trade, spending their lives in telling over specie: they have every body's money, and only return what was committed to them; and so little do they take for the trouble of doing your business, that one cannot help being obliged to them for their agency.

The high-way of remittance, is not that which brings in the most money to them; there are little by-paths which turn to much better account: here lies the great work of their profession: the more expert they

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they are in these windings and mazes of bankery, the more astonishing their fortune.

If these people are necessary in one respect, in another they are very hurtful. A person who intends to quit his country, but at the same time to carry off all his fortune, applies to one of these bankers, who remits him his whole substance on a piece of paper; which is immediately paid him in the country to which he is withdrawn. Thus they are instrumental in depriving the state of a wealth which appertains to it by nature. Bankers should not be allowed, but looked on as receivers, enabling men of evil intentions to impoverish the commonwealth.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, at Paris.

Venice.

I Was present the other day at a most pompous marriage, though very disproportionate. A mortal, about five feet and a half in height, married an

Vol. III.

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element six thousand leagues in length; the doge of Venice espoused the sea; the whole body of this state assisted at the nuptials, and, by the splendor of their equipage, did great honour to the new-married pair.

Though polygamy be forbidden among christian princes, the doge of Venice is allowed to marry, every year, a second time. He is also, with all his marriages, allowed to be impotent; and well is it for him; for, were he to lie only one night with his bride, his connubial bed would be his grave. In short, to consummate the marriage, the doge must be thrown into the sea; whereas now they throw only a ring.

Though the day of this princely marriage be fixed, it is not always performed on that day. The winds and storms sometimes put off the celebration; for, should it be solemnized when the bride is in an ill humour, she might swallow him up in the procession to the ceremony.

If the appointed day be favourable, his most serene highness goes on board a ship gilt all over with gold, and marries this element in the presence of the senate, and amidst the acclamations of numberless

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less multitudes, who flock from all parts to be present at his wedding.—I would have all ridiculous customs put an end to.

The reason given for this ceremony is, its being a commemoration of the sovereignty which the Venetians formerly had over the sea; but this sovereignty has long since seen its period: to what purpose do they keep up the figure when the reality is no more?

LETTER XXIX.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Cotaoyu-se, at Pekin.

Paris.

THERE is another luxury in France, and a very brittle one; that of porcelaine: it is also the most costly that ever human vanity invented.

I am concerned for the people here, to think, that the least shock of a cat, with one stroke of its paw, may utterly ruin a whole family. We formerly supplied France with this luxury; but being at a great distance, and vanity impatient in its demands, porcelaine manufactories have

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been

been set up at Paris. Vincennes and St. Cloud are become the china of France; and it is their business to ruin it. At present, all may the more easily gratify their taste in this luxury, it being every where to be had within a door or two.

It is affirmed, that about the middle of the last century, a porcelaine bowl, with a few plates, was magnificence; and a magnificence only seen among the princes of the blood, and the first quality: now nothing is more common. Porcelaine is to be seen among mechanics: but the consequence of this has been general indigence; for, in a nation where the government does not regulate the desires of the people, and public vanity ranges at large, luxury and poverty will always go together; and, among other evils, propagation is hurt by it.

I have been shewn, in a nobleman's house, a china representation of our emperor's nuptials, set up in an apartment which cost one hundred thousand livres: but they who are acquainted with this nobleman's affairs, say that this china marriage hinders that of two of his daughters.

LETTER XXX.

*The Same, to the Mandarin President of
the Sciences at Peking.*

Paris.

LITERATURE is easily acquired in France. You read over a folio in half a sheet of paper. There are people at Paris, whose livelihood it is to peruse great works, and publish them in little : these laborious ministers of the public idleness are called reviewers.

On the publication of a book, they immediately run through it from the beginning to the end, making extracts by the way. This is not done in order to be judges of it; for sentence is already passed; they know before-hand the works they are to praise, and those on which it behoves them to exert their criticism. Their pen is, as it were, second in command, being subordinate to the money of book-sellers and authors, whose books are set forth according to the reward given them; and this is in proportion to the magnitude of the work. The panegyric

of a folio is rated higher than that of a quarto; and this costs more than an octavo: a regulation quite necessary, as otherwise a paultry scribler in twelves might make as much noise in the world, as the author of a folio in royal paper.

This disbursement, however, is no absolute preservative against censure; for the number of the Paris reviewers being too great to purchase the applause of them all, the majority think they have a right to cry down a book, when no money has been given them to recommend it. Thus nothing is more common, than for a work to be praised in one journal, and vilified in another.

Thou wilt perhaps think the decisive judges of literature to be men of extensive knowledge and superior genius. Nothing less: when a writer has miscarried by some pamphlet, his shift is, to turn journalist.

Then, instead of exposing his productions to censure, he criticises those of others. This indeed is of one advantage to the public, as, instead of being wearied out by voluminous originals, it is only plagued with lame abridgements.

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LETTER XXXI.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, at Paris.

Venice.

IN this city are four devout shows, which draw a great resort. These are religious communities of young women worshipping God musically: they act several times every week; and the price is far short of the opera or comedy, so that this pious entertainment may be had for a trifle. Each of these theatres is distinguished by its kind of music: the *Pietà* adores God with the fiddle; the *Mendicanti*, with the flute; the *Hospitaleto*, with the flagelet; and the *Incurables*, with the timbrell.

The last is more in vogue than the others. Its pit, I mean the church, is always full; there is no getting in, unless one comes very early.

Farther, the actresses, in these four devout performances, are less dissolute than those of the prophane theatres: their manner of living gives less offence, being seen only through a grate: their di-

rectors alone can give them leave to go out; and to this privilege they add that of corrupting them.

L E T T E R XXXII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Director of Commerce at Peking.

Paris.

IN China every trader is the head man in his business; whereas, in Europe, he is only the second. A set of men called agents, or 'change-brokers, do your business; they are perpetually on the wing to enrich you, with little or no trouble to yourself. Every morning they give you notice of the course of exchange, and the current price of goods; they make purchases for you, transact sales of your effects, and digest the agreements, so that nothing remains for you but to sign.

These people would be of great use in trade, did not they themselves cramp it; but this industry of theirs enhances the price of the commodity, which diminishes the vent, in proportion to the tax laid on it: for consumption always keeps
pace

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pace with cheapness. Two or three hundred of these jobbers, diverting a considerable sum to their private profit, the general advantage must thereby be greatly diminished.

No body at Paris, or in most of the cities of this kingdom, can practise agency or brokerage without the king's licence; the privilege of raising such a contribution on trade is purchased from his majesty.

LETTER XXXIII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at Peking.

Paris.

AUTHORS are very scarce in France: not that the kingdom is in want of book-makers; never did it abound so much in writers; but small is the number of those who deserve that appellation.

Thou wilt be amazed to hear, that this kingdom, with the name of being that where letters most flourish, has, at present, no more than two authors of repute:

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one is called Montesquieu, the other Voltaire; and in their works are many exceptionable things.

It will be some concern to posterity, that the most famous of the two has composed only a political romance. *The Spirit of Laws*, his chief production, is a work purely ideal. It is adapted to no one nation in Europe, and still less to the age in which it makes its appearance.

The author defines the three forms of government, and says, that one is founded on virtue, the other on honour, and the third on fear: but he seems to forget that all constitutions have varied from their principles, and that they now rest on another foundation than he assigns to them.

To explain the spirit of laws, which he undertakes, these laws should be in their vigour. Now the states of Europe are less governed by laws, than by the corruption of laws.

Another defect in this work, and with which European writers are seldom chargeable, is being too laconic. The author forgets words, and mentions only things; which, for want of words, often happen to be obscure, and sometimes unintelligible. I allow precision to be the principal part
of

of diction; but, if I may be permitted the expression, it should not be over precise. Let expression have its measure: a thought, by too concise a turn, is maimed; and diffuseness relaxes its energy. For an author himself to understand what he is writing, is not the thing; he must likewise be understood by others.

Voltaire, on the other hand, is sterile in regard to things, having only made books for the sake of words. This writer has a magazine full of assortments of choice terms. It is the best manufactory of phrases of any in Europe. He has carried the colouring of expression to the highest perfection attainable in literary painting. Dazzled by the lustre of his varnish, his readers forget that he is misleading the present and future ages by fictitious narratives.

Take away from his writings the cadence of the words, and turn of the phrases, his books would be reduced to mere blank paper.

Something is wanting in all his compositions; not one of them is finished; that which is most so is the very piece that is looked on to be the most impious.

I might

I might also mention a third author, called John James Rousseau, whose reputation begins to spread ; but as yet he only gleans, in comparison of the two former ; and the distance he has to travel over, before he reaches them, is still immense. James is a thousand leagues behind Montesquieu, and wants five hundred to be up with Voltaire.

After Rousseau, or before him, is a fourth writer, who has written a book called the *Mind* : but this mind had like to have done for the author's body, for he was very near being sent to the gallies. The parliament of Paris took the matter in hand, and seemed to be highly offended at the maxims contained in it. The author was obliged to make a public acknowledgement that his mind wanted common sense ; and this acknowledgement proved more agreeable to truth, than the title of the work ; for I put the book in a crucible, and after the operation, nothing remained but a *caput mortuum*.

LETTER XXXIV.

*The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at
Pekin.*

Paris.

AN immense dictionary is on foot here: the booksellers concerned in it say that it will contain all the sciences: accordingly it is called *Encyclopedia*, from a Greek word signifying *universal*. Five or six men, who know but little, are to fill it with knowledge. Every leaf will be fraught with taste and erudition: there will be only genius wanting.

The *Encyclopedia* being reckoned not very orthodox, according to christian morality, was at first suppressed; but it is now some time ago since it made peace with religion, and came to terms with heaven. The impression was allowed to go on, on condition that the government should feign not to perceive it. This is a fetch of the ministry, that they may not be blamed for any impieties and heresies published in the kingdom.

The different sciences of the human mind are to be arranged in a grammatical order,

order, and the whole erudition of Europe dismembered alphabetically. If there are letters more barren in literature than others, so much the worse for the purchasers. Were this new work to be sold by numbers, I should be a purchaser for the letter C. I am persuaded I should meet with such absurdities in the article of China, as would afford me my money's worth of laughter.

Dictionaries are now very much in vogue all over Europe, and especially in France: this perhaps accounts for the decline of sciences, such books being very defective libraries; they are composed of scraps, gathered here and there, and served up in method: a scholar, who has a dictionary ranged alphabetically in his head, knows a great many useless things, and is ignorant of more that are necessary.

Should some European bonze go about introducing this method of instruction in our empire, I hope it will not be permitted.

If our classic authors contract the *cacotheses* of dictionary-making, China would soon see an end of substantial knowledge. Instead of all the sciences being contained
in

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in one book, one book should contain but one science. In this mingling of knowledge, after speaking of God, one comes to speak of Gog; which confounds all ideas, and cuts the thread of reflection. A mind, once habituated to these sudden transitions, becomes unfit for that methodical and connected study, necessary to the abstract sciences.

A conversation, in the manner of a dictionary, would be ridiculous; and our reading should never be different from our discourse.

LETTER XXXV.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

SOME governments in Europe are oddly constituted; their principles are the pleasure of the sovereign. In these countries there is no appeal from *I will have it so; this is my order; or, such is our good pleasure.* These words, when once pronounced, decide a business finally.

Did the kingdom lie at stake; were the total destruction of the people to be the

the consequence ; the sentence must take place.

The reason given for it is, that words were invented to avoid the usual tediousness of deliberations. Indeed, *I will have it so*, is much more expeditious than calling together a council of wise men to know whether we should will to have it so. These words silence all argument, and, though they carry nothing satisfactory, every body must be satisfied with them.

Should the king enter into a war against the interest of the nation ; should the lives of five or six hundred thousand subjects be thrown away on a mere nothing ; should all the riches of the state be swallowed up by it, and the people brought to incredible distresses ; on being asked the reason of a conduct so contrary to the law of nations, and the welfare of the subjects, his answer is, *It is our good pleasure*.

If generals, who know nothing of war, are put at the head of armies, fighting battles when they should be laying sieges ; harassing the troops, in marching and countermarching, instead of directly attacking the enemy ; in short, ruining every thing by their private quarrels : if able ministers

ministers are removed, and bunglers put into their places; this is another effect of *good pleasure*.

If the principal posts of the monarchy are filled by men void of capacity; if all employments are sold, and not obtained by services or abilities, but by money only; these things must be so, because they are his *good pleasure*.

I know of no government on the earth, more wretched than that founded on the pleasure of one mortal; which causes the grief of all others.

In every tribunal of the state of which I am speaking, is kept a writing in Gothic characters. The title of it is, *Political and Civil Constitution of the Monarchy*. I have read it over from the beginning to the end, and find, that the present administration is a direct contradiction to it. The king knows nothing of such a book; I do not believe any one of his subjects ever spoke to him of it in his whole life. Here is a representative body called parliament, and said to be instituted to maintain the rights of the people, to hinder them from being oppressed, and to oppose any undue stretch of the sovereign's prerogative; whereas, if it presumes only to make any remonstrances, it is dissolved, or banished, and

and not allowed to return till it will do as it is bid. This body is said to have the keeping of the laws; but that cannot be; for what does not exist, cannot be kept. The laws of this monarchy, notwithstanding what is said in the *Constitution*, are in the prince's head; and the parliament has no mastery over his head. One evident proof, that the laws are in him, is, that he can, of his own authority, or full power, abrogate all the former laws, and substitute others in their stead, as seems best to his *good pleasure*. No body of men must offer the least opposition.

The European politicians, who, I apprehend, always speak of what they do not understand, are for giving a temperament to this arbitrary power. They say, that the intermediate and dependent powers constitute the nature of this government; but, when this is known, nothing farther is known, than that here the government is despotic; these dependent intermediate powers so thoroughly depending on his will, that he can dispose of them as he pleases. They add, that this state is governed by fundamental laws; but it is not so; for these laws, to be fundamental, should be invariable, which they are not. These laws, continue they,
suppose

suppose mediate channels, through which the regal prerogative flows. There can be no fixed channels in a state, where the prince's power roves at random, and his despotism takes what course it pleases.

No nobility, continue these politicians, no monarch. In France there is a monarch and no nobility; I mean, no body of nobles to balance the prerogative. The king is the master of the lives and fortunes of his subjects. He may put to death both the meanest and highest. His power is not to be withstood by any body, either political or civil, since he has in his hand the strength of the state; I mean, the military; and, if he does not always make an ill use of it, it is because the exertion of his whole power may not always suit his interest.

Things, in their primary origin, might be as politicians represent them; but they are degenerated: at present, the prince's will turns the scale on which side he will; and, if he meets with any resistance, he forces it down. The great bodies, as those of the parliaments and nobility, have lost all their privileges. The progresses of despotism should have been gradually opposed; the kings should have been

been followed step by step; especially, the army should never have been at their disposal; for force is always a temptation to injustice.

Politicians are not agreed about the beginning of corruption, whether it was the sovereigns who first corrupted the subjects, or, whether the subjects themselves furnished them with the means of corrupting; but, from whatever quarter corruption came, it is certain that it exists, and that it brought in absolute power.

There is, at present, scarce any visible difference between this government and that of Constantinople: the king of this people, and a sultan of the Turks, are equal in authority, and alike despotic. The late French monarch used to say, that, of all the governments in the world, he liked that of the Great Turk the best; he praised what he delighted in.

LETTER XXXVI.

*The Same, to the Mandarin Cotao-yu-se,
at Pekin.*

Paris.

THE other day I saw, at an assembly, a gentleman, who seemed mightily pleased with himself, and not without reason; for all the fair sex think him an Adonis: indeed he has all the qualities which superlatively please them; for, besides his pretty simper, fine teeth, and singing some catches, he has always at hand a set of light and pleasant stories for the entertainment of the ladies.

He is so charming in himself, that, exclusive of his other talents, he can talk four hours together, without any one's perceiving him to steal from himself: he is, besides, possessed of the characteristic accomplishments which most powerfully attract the ladies esteem, being an arrant coxcomb.

I am at a loss, why the men here so much lay to heart the slights of women: I should rather think them matter of vanity, as at least proving, that they are
exempt

exempt from those petty qualities, with which the great ones are almost always found incompatible.

A woman is distinguished in a town for her beauty and other accomplishments. Several persons of character and real merit pay their addresses to her; but they are scornfully rejected, whilst a pert shuttle-brained coxcomb shall gain her at once.

When I am told, that a man has miscarried in his addresses to a woman, and that she, instead of closing with his honourable offers, scarce treats him with common civility; I immediately conclude him a man of merit: I could even carry the inference farther, and add that his merit is the very cause of his miscarriage.

Virtue and merit are naturally accompanied with modesty, which obliges him to be upon his guard; whilst the conceited coxcomb launches out, at random, into jokes and trifles: the former observes a decent reserve; the latter is free and merrry, and consequently will always get the better with women. I do not say but this rule has a great many exceptions; it is however the general rule.

LETTER XXXVII.

*The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at
Pekin.*

Paris.

A Set of people, called politicians, are at open war here. I was lately present at one of their battles, which happened in the Thuilleries. It began at ten in the morning, and lasted till one in the afternoon.

The French differ among themselves about the greatness of their power. Their excessive conceit in other respects is, with many, deficient in this point. Whether it be levity, whim, or party-spirit, it is certain, that the other powers, now at war with this monarchy, are not without their partisans in the midst of Paris.

The King of Prussia is very powerful in France; I question whether he is stronger in his own dominions. The house of Austria has likewise its champions; and no small number declare for England or Russia. Thus here are four
different

different parties always armed, that is, with some news-paper.

A courier lately arrived from Germany, with tidings, that a general of the empress-queen's had made a Prussian corps of sixteen thousand men prisoners of war. On this, the party of the Austrian news-mongers exulting, dispatched away some of their light troops to the Thuilleries, to reconnoitre the ground, and see whether there were not some forces of the opposite party, whom they might engage.

On these occasions, it is usual to send out a news-monger to public places with a letter in his hand; which, after getting a crowd about him, he reads with an emphatic accent. The Prussian and English intelligencers were in such a consternation, that, instead of shewing themselves, they lurked behind the trees which formed the great walk in this garden. Here they precipitately held a council of war, in which it was determined, it being the best thing they could do, to deny the fact; that is, to aver that the taking of sixteen thousand Prussians was only one of their adversaries political lies.

Now

Now hostilities began : a body of Prussians, issuing from an ambuscade, fell on a detachment of French, and broke it, by dint of invectives. The Austrians, seeing their allies the French in disorder, hastened to assist them.

In the mean time, the Russians, who had never been of any account in the Thuilleries, by reason of the slowness of their operations in Germany, joined in the fray. Now the action was become general : invectives, abuses, bravadoes, curses, insulting expressions, resounded on every side ; and, as in party disputes words soon lead to blows, they fell to scuffling, and fought with the utmost animosity.

A knight of St. Lewis received, on this occasion, a kick on the shin, which lamed him for several days ; a lawyer, of the French party, was beaten to mummy by a Prussian ; a zealous stickler of prince Ferdinand's army threw off the wig of a president *à mortier*, who was bawling in defence of the house of Austria, and sent him away bare-headed, like a criminal doing public penance ; an abbé, asserting that one Prussian would beat two Frenchmen, was severely pummelled by a French invalid officer, with only one arm.

The news-mongers on the English side distinguished themselves greatly, and, like the brave Britons, whose cause they maintained, vigorously dealt about their fist-cuffs. In a word, the contest being for reprisals, in compensation for the capture of a body of troops, the English and Prussians were so alert in their attacks, that they made prisoners a body of French and Austrians with some Russians among them; not releasing them till they gave their parole, that they would not speak a word of the king of Prussia till the war was over. The capitulation was signed at the military coffee-house, in St. Honoré's-street: thus ended this memorable action, in which, whatever blows were given, little or no blood was shed.

LETTER XXXVIII.

The Same, to the Same, at Peking.

Paris.

BESIDES the four ministers who direct the French government, there is one at the helm of literature; and this branch is not the least troublesome:
for

for to regulate authors, and pronounce sentence on their writings, is no slight affair.

A minister must be especially watchful against smuggling, the republic of letters being a country swarming with cheats and pilferers.

Assistance being absolutely necessary for so laborious an employment, this minister has twenty four deputies, called censors, without whose knowledge, or assent, no book is to be printed. Their department is the human understanding: they have the general jurisdiction of genius; all who are for travelling in the republic of letters must take out passports signed by them. They grant licences to authors for acquiring reputation.

This court of genius consists of several committees, who have their respective provinces. Imagine not, that these censors are persons of any extraordinary erudition, or judgment. The case is this: when a smatterer in literature has incurred the ridicule of the public by the fertility of his productions, he makes interest for a censorship; then behold him, at once, a professor of genius, and a supreme judge of sciences he does not understand.

Besides the ignorance of these committees, the far greater part of the judges are either prejudiced or venal. Every book-feller has two or three pensioners in this literary court, who set their *Imprimatur* to all his manuscripts.

This foundation, one would think, was calculated to fill Europe with bad books, and hinder the impression of good. An author, with no other recommendation than the merit of his compositions, is in great danger of being rejected by those who are to license them.

Concerning this, it is said, that to judge of the sciences does not require learning; which is as much as to say, that a clear sight is not necessary to judge of colours. They alledge the instances of judges who are not lawyers; but in the courts of justice there are positive laws and forms; whereas the sciences have no such thing.

Another inconvenience in these committees, is the laziness of the members, who do business only when they please; for the profession of an examiner of works of genius is a burden, and not an employment. The manuscripts are only read when a judge is in the humour, and returned when he thinks fit.

These

These offices for literary warrants are extremely long-winded; they only run over the rags and flitters of wit; the great works stick at the sluggishness of the censors.

LETTER XXXIX.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, at Paris.

Venice.

I Went yesterday to the Ridotto, which I can only call a gaming-school, kept by the republic itself, where the citizens learn vicious habits. Servants disposed to rob their masters, women desirous of injuring their husbands, gamesters inclined to be cheats, need only frequent the Ridotto, and they will soon become familiar with such crimes.

A foreigner must be extremely struck at seeing the very legislature of this state seducing the nation.

Fifty senators, with cards in their hands, ask and urge the people to ruin themselves.

It is only the noble Venetians who are allowed to corrupt the citizens. This right they hold by their birth; it is the privilege of their rank.

I have often intimated to thee this contradiction of the European governments. Most of them are for leading the people to virtue by the way of vice.

The republic of Venice keeps an open gaming-house; the public punts there in masks; and the bankers, who are gentlemen, sit bare-faced: this is just the reverse of what should be; the nobles ought to hide their faces.

LETTER XL.

The Same, to the Same, at Paris.

Venice.

THERE is an inquisition of bonzes here, as in Spain and Portugal; only it cannot burn citizens without the state's leave, which is no bad regulation; for, should all, whom this tribunal might condemn, be actually put to death, Venice would soon be a desert.

Not

Not that the Venetians do not believe in God, but they are for believing in him after their own way.

In all the other states of Italy the pope is the first person in the government; whereas at Venice he is only the second. If any ordinances of his are not agreeable to the senate, they make no more of breaking them than a glass.

The bonzes are no less subordinate than the pope: if any one pretends to deviate from the obedience common to the other subjects, he is banished, or sent away to their common father, who resides at Rome.

All religions are tolerated at Venice, even to those of wicked priests. It must however be owned, that they are not all miscreants. Some, in order to live well, eat Christ two or three times a day. This the republic knows, and connives at it: provided a person be orthodox in regard to the government, he may be as heretical as he pleases in religion. You may question the pope's infallibility, provided you do not take upon you to doubt of that of the *configlieto*.

LETTER XLI.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at Pekin.

Paris.

THE Parisians are so busy, that they have no time to live. Placemen kill themselves with application. The innovators are taken up in systems from morning till night. The schemers daily bring forth new projects; the men of business shut themselves up in inaccessible closets; the writers, here called authors, are in a continual labour of mind, incessantly bringing forth thoughts; the very courtiers are busy, were it only in the pains they take to be thought so; the lovers of pleasure are so hurried, that they have not time to have nothing to do, to indulge one's self being a very troublesome life at Paris. For to contrive every day new gratifications, requires great effort of mind, and labour of body; there must be going and coming, keeping appointments, spending the day in company, and sitting up late: now all this is hard service. The very loungers

loungers by profession are busy; for at Paris idleness itself is a fatigue.

Women, who, one would think, should have no business, have one very cumbersome, which is, to know and intermeddle in that of the whole city. Their dress, their ornaments, their desire of being admired, and of gaining distinction every where, seems enough, without minding any thing else. To see the loads of business, under which those very persons that have none are ready to sink, is prodigious. I cannot tell how idlers hold out!

One single woman shall lead two or three hundred artizans a weary life: if she takes it into her head to appear on a certain day in a new dress, there is no longer any quiet in fifty families. I have seen a lady dressed in manufactures of three different centuries. She has been a plague both to past and present generations.

In a word, all the several classes of society are ever in a bustle; so that at Paris one may be rather said to live after death, than in one's life-time.

L E T T E R XLII.

The Same, to the Same, at Peking.

Paris.

OF all the *literati* in this capital none are more profound than those called politicians: the extent of their erudition in their peculiar science, politics, is prodigious. Other philosophers fluctuate in doubts; these are sure in every thing.

They may be considered as the plenipotentiaries of the Christian world; they direct Europe; they declare, at the beginning of a war, what will be the issue of it: you know before-hand in what the quarrels of princes will terminate. They plan the marches of generals, and lay down their motions; they seem to have measured geometrically the extent of their abilities and supplies.

Not a courier can be sent from a prince, but they know the contents of the dispatches; and they will tell you on what business an ambassador is going: no cabinet-intrigues are hid from them; and they

they decide the interests of princes : so that, though it does not appear they have any correspondence with courts, they are acquainted with all their intentions ; and were they not almost always out in their conjectures, they might be thought conjurers.

Formerly they were great betters, but have lost so many wagers, that at present they have not wherewith to contradict the least event. The king of Prussia has beggared them : when that prince began the war, which has now lasted six years, they laid that he would not hold out one campaign ; and, consequently, lost : they laid the following year, and lost again ; and so on, till they have nothing left to lose.

What comforts them in their disasters, is, that they have reasons which demonstrate, that they ought to have won ; and so persuaded are they of this, that were they not already ruined, they would ruin themselves again ; for this class of *literati* will never yield to facts ; they are all for *hypotheses* ; they do not so much mind what is, as what should be.

Frederic has been their ruin ; not a siege, or battle of his, which has not extremely

tremely hurt them; especially one battle which broke great numbers of them: then indeed the most knowing ones might have been taken in; and scarce was ever wager lost, with so fair a prospect of winning.

Before these miscarriages they were able to carry on correspondences in foreign countries; but now they must take up with Dutch Gazettes for intelligence.

Their general rendezvous is the great walk in the garden of Palais-royal; there they hold forth, and promulgate what they know nothing of themselves. Were they agreed in their principles, they would deafen both city and suburbs; but happily for the public tranquillity, some flatly deny what others positively affirm; and this silences the noise of altercation.

News-mongers are of two kinds; some birds of ill omen, ever portending some disaster: according to them the French nation is at the lowest ebb, and the whole body of the monarchy on the eve of perishing. The others are political syrens with a fascinating voice: these consolatory beings find a lenitive for every calamity. If France loses a decisive battle, so much the better, say they; great misfortunes
are

are ever the forerunners of peace. If the English dispossess the monarchy of rich countries in America, this they will have to be good news, as easing the state of the vast expences in keeping them. If the people are loaded with excessive imposts, for defraying the charges of armies, still so much the better, as what is violent cannot last. They have always two or three proverbs at hand to tack to a piece of bad news, as palliatives to public calamities. Two of the most trite are these:

Foul weather brings fair.

After a storm comes a calm.

But, in the mean time, France is ravaged by a continual storm.

LETTER XLIII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Prime Minister at Peking.

Paris.

WAR does not impoverish every body in France; some there are who grow rich by this calamity.

Sieges and battles require great taxes to be laid on the people; and from the levying

vying of these burthens, springs this new-fashioned opulence; a worse misfortune than the very evil which produces it. A new breed of managers and clerks prey more fatally on the vitals of the monarchy, than taxes and imposts. Nor is this all: armies farther require implements and provisions: hence directors, store-keepers, comptrollers, and inspectors; a second breed of leeches, draining the people of their purest blood, and making a war on it more destructive than that of the enemy.

There is not a clerk of the victualling-office, who, in one campaign, does not make a plentiful provision for himself, were he to live to the end of the world. This I am inclined to believe; for he who cribs from the subsistence of two hundred thousand men, must of course have a large subsistence.

The hospitals of the army, especially, are the sources of over-grown fortunes. They are at present such rich mines, that those of Peru do not equal the profit of them.

I happened lately to dine with one of these commissioners, who take upon them the care of the sick and wounded soldiers: since this war he has built himself a very
grand

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grand town-house, and keeps the best table in Paris. On the soup being served up, every body spoke highly in its praise. No wonder it should be rich, whispered one of the guests who sat next to me, for it is squeezed out of the meat of twenty thousand sick men.

LETTER XLIV.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Cotaoyu-se, at Pekin.

Paris.

EXCLUSIVE of the opera and French comedy, Paris has a third theatre, consisting of buffoons, sent for from Italy, as if France had no such fools of its own. It would not, indeed, be very easy to find any more obscene, or more bald and insipid in their supposed pleasantries. One good thing however is, that they generally act in a language little understood : and certainly these people are ashamed of themselves ; for, though they act in public, they dare not appear undisguised, uttering their low coundrums and jests under a mask. One would

would think, from the French gleanings the follies of other nations, that they have not enough of their own growth.

A two-legged animal with a flat nose, swarthy complexion, pigs eyes, the mouth of an ox, the plumage of a bird, and the gesticulations of an ape, is at the head of this theatre : from him arises the chief diversion of the spectators, and for this he usually makes use of puns and double-entendres, both very low. I own, I could not but heartily pity the French nation on seeing it so highly diverted with such wretched stuff. The bursts of laughter from all quarters almost drew tears from me. I have not yet made any enquiry concerning the origin of this institution ; for I cannot think that the French nation ever stood in need of foreign drollery to keep it in high spirits.

This theatre apes all the others : its province is parody ; for want of original genius it deals only in copies.

LET-

LETTER XLV.

*The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at
Pekin.*

Paris.

NOT long since, the chevalier carried me to a lady of his acquaintance, where we found a good company of pretty women. We placed ourselves so as to see all the beauties of this circle, without being observed; being thus at liberty to discourse of its several members, most of whom my companion knew.

My eye was first attracted by a young and beautiful lady, with whose person I was much taken; yet, I thought, amidst all the lustre of her charms, I discerned some secret disquietude. This I communicated to the chevalier, pointing at her with my eye. You are not mistaken, answered he; that beauty labours under an anxiety of mind. Before her marriage our monarch had cast his eye on her, and she already looked on herself as sovereign of the little apartments at Versailles: but it came to nothing. From that instant she
fell

fell into a deep melancholy. It was thought that marriage would relieve the lady, and a rich financier was found out for her; but this only inflamed the distemper; and physiognomists say that the disappointment will carry her to the grave. It is indeed a cutting stroke, instead of being the mistress of a mighty prince, to be yoked to a low-lived contractor. This is a reverse, for which, among us, no virtue, morality, nor religion, can be a match.

That other pretty woman, said I, next to her, and also seemingly in a pining way, who is she? That, answered the chevalier, is another court-patient: the same cause has produced the same effect. How! said I, has the king cast his eye on this also? No, returned he; but she has cast her eye on the king. Fairer than she who possesses the monarch's affection, and not inferior in other allurements, her heart was bent on the royal conquest. With this view, she has galloped all over Versailles park, never missing a hunt, and always posting herself in the avenues through which the king was to pass; but it did not take. What afflicts her the most is, that the king saw her, with-
out

out taking notice of her, and met her eyes with the greatest indifference.

I see, at some distance from the two former, a lady of no disagreeable person, and her looks of the same melancholy cast. Pray, who is she? Why, she is a third valetudinarian of the same stamp. What! another court-patient? replied I hastily: your emperor designs to kill all the pretty women in Paris. How can it be helped? returned he: they are women who, by all means, will be indisposed, on account of a desire which possesses them of being sick. This last always falls into a swoon, every time she hears that the present favourite has made a general, a cardinal, or a minister of state. She fancies that the disposal of all these employments is her right, and that all the authority of the other is a downright usurpation on her charms. In the mean time, to keep up her rights, she nominates to the principal employments of the kingdom, and makes bishops in *partibus*.

I will trouble you with no more questions, only tell me who is that young beauty opposite to us, with a motley face; I mean, half sprightly and half melancholy. Why, this is a lady with whom the king
has

has lain only once : accordingly, her joy is but very imperfect ; so that when she thinks on her felicity, she is all life ; but when the fleeting dream of her grandeur obtrudes itself on her mind, when she thinks on his majesty's offering at her altar but once, she cannot forbear giving herself up to melancholy.

L E T T E R XLVI.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, at Paris.

Venice.

THOU wilt be apt to think that I have a very agreeable life of it at Venice ; as, in Europe, it is accounted the mansion of pleasure. Far from it ; I am tired to death : one must be, as it were, cut out for the diversions of this city to partake of them. A foreigner, who loves neither gaming nor women, is quite forlorn ; he may as well be in a desert as at Venice ; every body here minds those diversions too much to mind him.

Here you are perpetually in company with vice ; life is a round of voluptuousness

ness and frivolous amusements: the morning goes away in sauntering; in the afternoon they mask themselves, in the evening go to the play; and the rest of the night is spent in gaming, or with women.

If the Venetian women are handsome, they are still more amorous; but in this they are authorised by the republic; for here every thing receives the sanction of the great council. It has often been deliberated, whether licentiousness ought not to be reformed; but after duly considering the point, things have been left as they were. Thus the practice of incontinence is allowed to the sex at their own discretion.

In China, we think there can be no good government without good morals, and that a people, to be happy, must be virtuous. That maxim is not known here. Politics have nothing to do with morality. Corruption is so far from being held incompatible with political authority, that politicians have advanced, that it might be made one of its principal engines.

During six months of the year, vice and extravagancy prevail here to a degree

gree really frightful; and, for the more free commission of enormities, the republic allows disguises. Here every body may give themselves up to every kind of debauchery: this they call freedom; and really so free are they, that they have shaken off the very yoke of remorse.

It is not the populace alone which follows such infamous profligacy; a vein of dissoluteness runs through every class.

This city had formerly public prostitutes, dwelling in a particular quarter, and treated with all the contempt their profession deserved; but this depravation has been superseded by one more eminent; the very Venetian ladies are become courtesans.

Modern manners have abolished the ancient. Marriage now is mere debauchery. Conjugal love is out of date. A husband and wife would expose themselves in setting up for fidelity; they would be ashamed of loving one another. If a woman has no gallant, it is charged on her want of allurements, and thus she disgraces her husband. However, few or none give their husbands such a mortification. Illicit love is not reckoned a disgrace on either side.

It

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It is an established prepossession, and corroborated by infinite instances. It seems an universal agreement, that the wife of one noble shall be the mistress to another, and all reciprocally disgrace each other by common consent. Such manners make one shudder.

LETTER XLVII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at Peking.

Paris.

THE French are commonly said to be generous. Indeed no nation in the world comes up to them in protestations; history has nothing equal to their generosity and nobleness of mind in this respect. Their expence in offers of services is really prodigious.

On my arrival here, several French, whom I scarce knew, were excessively forward to oblige me; they would not let me alone till I had given them my word, that I would occasionally dispose of every thing in their power. Not many days after, I wrote to him, who had
been

been most urgent, to spare me his country house for a month or two : instead of the keys, he sends me a letter, that he could not comply with my desire, it being under repair.

The day after, I desired a second to send me five hundred ounces of silver, till my banker, who was in the country, should be come to town : he refused me, under pretence of his having, the very day before, made a remittance, which had left him quite bare.

Two days after, I sent my servant to a third, to let him know that I wanted his coach for four days : the answer was, that he had lent it out. On this, I was for borrowing a horse from a fourth, only to take an airing ; but I was given to understand that he was lame.

The French alledge in excuse, that all offers of services are a coin which every body knows the value of. Be it so among the natives ; but foreigners, at least, should be advised of these deceits. The calculators of public debts affirm, that were the French to make good the engagements contracted by their offers, the nation, if its cash were a hundred thousand millions

millions more than it is, would not have a single farthing left.

LETTER XLVIII.

The Same, to the Superintendant of Religion at Peking.

Paris.
MY letter on the christian idols informed thee, that saints are counsellors pleading with God, in behalf of men. Their principal business, as at the bar, is to varnish over the worst cause, and to make black white. The form of the pleadings is the same; all the difference is in the sentence. If the saint sets the fact in an advantageous light, and gives it a favourable turn, the sinner gains his suit with costs. When the costs are divided, the two parties indemnify each other. God gives the delights of heaven, and the sinner the pains of purgatory.

I send thee here one of these pleadings, which is carefully kept in a convent of bonzes; a saint interceding for a sinner

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who

who has killed a man. The scene is in heaven, at the foot of the Deity's throne.

The Saint. O thou Being of Beings! Maker of Heaven and Earth! great God, who didst die on the tree of the cross to redeem mankind, and whose goodness is without bounds! I come to intercede for thy mercy to a poor mortal, who has killed another.

God angrily. Not a word of those accursed murderers; I am determined never to shew them any mercy.

The Saint. But he, for whom I now offer my mediation, is a true penitent.

God. A fine repentance truly, when the murder is committed!

The Saint. But, O God of mankind! consider thy power.—

God. That is what I am now considering: the pardon of this crime would be lessening my authority: my clemency here elashes with my glory; for, should all men fall to killing one another, there will soon be an end of my power in the world.

The Saint. Yet I must beg thou wilt be pleased to pardon this unhappy man-slayer.

God. This sin should be less pardoned now than ever; for most nations are making

ing what haste they can to destroy each other by wars.

The Saint. But what signifies it, O God ? the thing is done, the man is dead ; there is no bringing him to life again.

God mildly. Who art thou ?

The Saint. Saint Policarp.

God. And how come you to intercede for murderers ? If I am not mistaken, that is none of your business.

Saint. He is one of my old customers ; I have often interceded with you for him. He begged this favour of me, and I could not well refuse it.

God. I suppose he has made you a present of some fine wax candle.

Saint. He is indeed very generous in his offerings.

God. That is the way of all you saints. For a few pounds of wax, you would plead for the most enormous crime. Now mind, Policarp, I will for this time pardon the murderer, as you are so earnest in this cause ; but never ask me such a thing again ; for I give you my word, that, for the next murder he commits, I will damn him for ever and ever.

LETTER XLIX.

*The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at
Pekin.*

Paris.

HERE is a minister of state, who has the king's licence for corrupting the morals of the nation: women, intending to prostitute themselves and become infamous, apply to him. His department is licentiousness, being president of all the Paris playhouses. This minister may be said, in some measure, to hold the reins of debauchery: he signs the passports of profligacy; a woman, with his licence for immorality, may boldly give herself up to all manner of corruption: that is, when once he has appointed her for the stage, the censor of manners, or the *lieutenant de police*, as he is here called, dares not touch her.

A young person disposed to throw off the yoke of modesty, a girl determined to leave her father and mother, and follow wicked courses, a wife resolved on parting from her husband, to prostitute herself publicly

publicly with her gallant, need only apply to this odious office. Couldst thou ever have thought that there had been such establishments among a civilized people, and that they, who should discourage vice and attend to the national morals, are the first in corrupting them? This is a privilege of the crown; for the power of authorizing debauchery is derived from the sovereign.

The playhouse-girls have the government's permission for profligacy: another privilege of their's is, to ruin families, and squander away the fortune of minors, to hinder lawful marriages, to draw husbands from their wives, to diminish population, and to fill the kingdom with shameful distempers, &c.

The other day I was shewn one of these abandoned playhouse-girls, who lately threw into a shivering fit no less a person than the chief magistrate of Paris. He had summoned her, to make her give an account of a sum of six hundred thousand livres, which a financier, with a family, had lavished away on her. At first, the actress excepted against the incompetency of the court; but afterwards made her appearance purely for the satisfaction of

insulting its chief. “ Madam, (said the
“ judge, already confused,) I know this is
“ going beyond the limits of my post ; but
“ zeal—” “ Zeal, Sir! (hastily interrupted
“ the prostitute) is to know one’s duty:
“ it is not for such a one as you to send
“ for such a one as I. You know, that I
“ belong to the opera, and am distinguish-
“ ed as a dancer: so necessary a person
“ to the public, as I am, is not made to
“ attend at the police.

“ Besides, Sir, what is the mighty bu-
“ siness? Why truly a financier has spent
“ six hundred thousand livres with me.
“ Well, and what have you to say to that?
“ cannot a Frenchman give his money to
“ whom he pleases? There is no law in
“ France, at least that I know of, by
“ which a rich man is not to give, and a
“ poor woman not to receive. If you are
“ a lawyer, you ought to know, that, of
“ all acquisitions, that which comes by
“ gift is the most lawful. I suppose you
“ would have opera-girls wait till their
“ lovers die, to be heiresses by will.

“ Only one word more, Mr. Gravity :
“ this said financier has indeed given me
“ half a million ; yet is there one thing
“ which

“ which vexes me ; and that is, that he
 “ did not give me as much more.”

At these words, she burst out a laughing, started up, stalked away to her chariot, and left the judge quite stupified at her petulance.

L E T T E R L.

*The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at
 Peking.*

Paris.

IT is easy to keep awake at Paris, but not easy sleeping : the buz of eight or nine hundred thousand persons confabulating together, the continual racket of twenty thousand coaches, the tumult and confusion in the streets, the bustle of the inhabitants, the loud cries of higlers, the mock-music of quacks to gull passengers, the rumbling of drums beating up for soldiers, the singing of processions and burials, the vociferations in publishing arrears and sentences, the shrillness of trumpets giving notice that some body is going to be whipped or hanged, all this has little or no tendency to repose.

This hubbub of the day is immediately succeeded by the clutter of the night. People are no sooner got to bed, than the bonzes and bonzesses begin their noises. At midnight the air rings with the multitude of bells and chimes, all giving notice that those devout persons are going to pray to God. At two o'clock in the morning, when one begins to have some sleep, the tinkling comes on again. At day-break more chiming. All religious and social duties are here notified by noise: on good news coming from the army the cannons roar, and on any one's dying the bells toll. The sovereign, the politics, religion, God, the saints, the angels, and the very dead, concur in killing the living.

LETTER LI.

The Same, to the Mandarin Cotaö-yu-se, at Pekin.

Paris.

THE chevalier, who looks upon us as people dwelling in the antipodes of human reason, is surpris'd at hearing that the Chinese have made any progress
in

in the sciences, and his wonder is little abated, on being told that we have understanding. This leads him, not seldom, to put some questions to me, which are truly European.

Mr. Chinese, said he lately to me, I have heard and read that there are men of learning and parts among you: but, by your leave, how come you by this genius? For to make a progress in arts and sciences there must be principles and elements; and I always thought that learning had never crossed the line; that Europe alone was enlightened, whilst all the remainder of the universe lay in Cymmerian darkness.

Monsieur le Chevalier, answered I, this I shall clear up to you. You are to suppose that China, though little less than all Europe put together, makes only one family; and that this family is brought up under the eye of a father, who takes equal care of the education of all his children. Birth, rank, and fortune, do not in the least alter this education. It is bestowed on every member of the state. The situation of places, the distance of men, the quality of provinces, the largeness of cities, the politeness of towns, make no difference.

ference. Where-ever there are four Chinese, there is a master to instruct them.

By this general education, in an empire of such extent as China, it is impossible but that the genius of a great number of persons must make its way through the croud, and break forth to the public advantage.

But education would not be a jot the better for being universal, were it not founded on solid principles. The method our masters, or rather the government, take in forming the mind for sciences, is this.

All the sciences are interdicted to us in our childhood; the only book put into our hands is Confucius, as containing the first elements of the philosophy of our religion. We are first taught to read it, and then to understand it; which makes two different studies, one preparative to the other.

We are not allowed in our youth to have wit, nor acquire any one branch of knowledge, but what is to serve as a foundation to all the rest. With us, the sciences are not to be placed in our mind before their time, and not till the understanding is prepared for receiving them.

Purity

Purity of language is one of the first preparatives ; for we judge, that there can be no just thinking without a precise manner of expression. Speech, being the the image of the soul, must be clear ; otherwise the exhibition of our ideas will be ambiguous.

Next to speech, comes the knowledge of such morals, manners, customs, and ceremonies, as are originated among us. Nothing is more common in Europe, by what I see, than *literati* and great scholars without the slightest knowledge of things, which constitute the most essential duties of civil life. They are acquainted with all the sciences, except the most necessary. In China, these things, far from being neglected, are taught in schools by principles equally with the most important sciences. A man of letters among us is known by his graceful easiness in making a bow. These preparatives being gone through, every one chuses the science to which he thinks his genius best adapted ; but which ever is embraced, there is no professing it, till after standing the test of many very strict examinations by a company of mandarins of great abilities, appointed by the emperor :

ror : for, as taking what does not belong to us is a theft, we hold, that to assume the title of a scholar, without being so in reality, is also a public injury.

They, who when examined are found unequal to the science in which they would take their degree, are severely punished ; for among us, to be deficient in abilities for distinguishing ourselves in the branch of learning of our own chusing is a great crime, as implying many other defects ; and it may even prove a capital case. This law, however cruel it may appear, is very just and beneficial, as preventing a multitude of vices, which false knowledge ever introduces. At the last examination, the emperor himself assists, and is personally a witness to the capacity of those subjects, who are the best qualified to distinguish themselves in arts and sciences.

L E T.

LETTER LII.

*The Same, to the Mandarin Superintendent
of Trade at Peking.*

Paris.

EUROPE is under contribution to the Indies; it annually remits thither considerable sums for the support of its luxury. The Indians dig in their mines for small pebbles, which, on being ingeniously cut, have a great lustre, and send forth, as it were, sparkles of fire. These are called diamonds; and the women are so excessively fond of them, that there is nothing they would not do for a pretty brilliant.

Such a present is the shortest cut to their heart, as being the readiest way to gratify their vanity. Many a one, after long withstanding a beautiful person, has immediately yielded to a beautiful diamond.

Besides, these little pebbles here promote marriages; a woman must have a strong aversion indeed to a man, if a set of diamonds does not reconcile her to him,

him: they seem endued with a kind of sympathetic virtue. The Indies may be said to make most of the matches in Europe: many a difficult beauty would never have bowed the neck to the yoke of wedlock, had she not been dazzled by a stone from the Eastern mines.

It is affirmed, that the value of these pebbles, now in France, is little short of its current specie; so that this luxury has impoverished the nation by one half, and without it she would be as rich again as she is; for it must not be thought that the state can ever realise this ostentation: were it to make a sale of all its diamonds, there would instantly be a great fall in the value of them. It is a wealth no farther real, if I may be allowed the expression, than as it is chimerical.

But the original of this luxury is not so detrimental as the copy. In the want of a sufficient number of natural diamonds, they have had recourse to art; and an India has been set up at Paris. These precious pebbles, the productions of nature, are become the business of artists. The work of God is made a manufacture.

This imitative luxury enables every one to shine. The disproportion of the price
from

CHINESE SPY. 135

from the original is such, that a single crown will purchase a hundred thousand. But these hundred thousand cost less than one, because they contain some value, such as it is, whereas the other has none at all. These fictitious diamonds dissolve of themselves; so that there must be daily a new creation, which is a vast inhancement of the price.

The reason in vindication of it is, that the money does not go out of the kingdom. But the circulation by this luxury is lumped together, and not duly extended: I have seen one of these diamond makers, said to be worth above a million. It would be almost as well for France, if this sum, thus in the hands of one person, had been sent to the Indies.

L E T T E R LIII.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, at Paris.

Ferrara.

IS there any colony in Asia that would be willing to come and dwell in a large and well-built European city, full of empty houses?

houses? I know of such a city; and that is Ferrara, where I now am, and from whence I write to thee. It may very well put this bill on its gates, A CITY TO BE LETT.

I am here almost alone with another foreigner, called the vice-legate.

The dispeopling of this city is attributed to the bad air; but I rather think the cause to be in the bad government.

How many countries in Europe, with a climate not to be compared with that of Ferrara, are yet full of inhabitants!

This city appears, from the history of Italy, to have formerly contained a great number of inhabitants; at present it has nothing but buildings.

This country is without agriculture, arts, or trade; and this alone is enough to thin it.

It has no master; for in Europe, a state belonging to the church belongs to nobody. Now never was any state known to flourish without a political chief; for I do not look on the ecclesiastical mandarin, who sends another to a government he can't attend to himself, to be any thing of a chief.

Several states have made a resignation of themselves to the holy see; but Ferrara the

the popes usurped. They ordered its lawful sovereign to depart, and seated themselves in his throne.

Indeed they herein closely kept to the pontifical forms: they previously excommunicated him, than which, in those times, there could not be a better contrivance for making a prince odious to his subjects, as it discharged them from the oath of fidelity.

Here men and women shut themselves up in convents, so that the city is a perfect community of monks and nuns. The men go into monasteries, and the young women are recluses; so that generation is absolutely separated.

If colonies are not sent to Ferrara, the city, in a short time, must be quite bare of inhabitants; then the apostolic agent may return to Rome, and say to the pope, Your holiness has the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and here I bring you those of an earthly sovereignty.

L E T.

LETTER LIV.

*The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin
Cotao-yu-fe, at Peking.*

Paris.

THE European traders have a very easy way of enriching themselves. Their method is this: they get together as much money as they can possibly raise, then shut their door, and keep what they have. This is here called a bankruptcy.

This creditable way of getting other people's substance has the sanction of the magistrate. The methods observed in it are three, but the drift of all is the same.

The first is, to bring one's creditors to a meeting, and there declare to them, "Gentlemen, I owe you a million of
" livres; I can pay you only fifty thou-
" sand: that's my last word; you may
" take or leave." This way of purloining other people's property, as it is the most honourable, so it is the most in use; for thus the public knows nothing of the matter, and the person's general credit not being diminished, he becomes enabled,

enabled, at a proper juncture, to make a second private declaration to another set of creditors.

The second method is, the sending his books to an office, and keeping the money. These books are always in order, as one may commit to paper what one pleases. Examiners are appointed; the affair is soon brought to an issue; and they go into trade again, as if nothing had happened.

The last is quite plain. The best effects are turned into cash, which the parties carry off, and leave the creditors to make the best of bad debts, and unsaleable goods. This is called a fraudulent bankruptcy; but, between this and the others, all the difference generally lies only in a few written pages. At the first bankruptcy, the party is seldom rich; nor in very flourishing circumstances at the second; but, at the third, his fortune is large.

The European governments have no right notions in mercantile administration. The public disorders are always confounded with the personal. A trader, by stopping payment, makes a breach in the trading community. Commerce is affected

ed by it ; it discourages industry and skill. In a word, he is a criminal, as having imbezzled the trust consigned to him. His cause cannot properly be tried by his peers: his offence comes under the cognizance of the government. As the general welfare is interested therein, it should be tried like other public crimes. Friendly bankrupts, as they are called, are contrary to the sovereign's justice and the fundamental laws. A person, on devoting himself to commerce, becomes the commonwealth's man. All his measures should be open and warrantable by law : his secret agreements are clandestine plots against the government; and the creditor no less culpable than the debtor. The bankrupt, on his failure, is reputed the king's prisoner, and should be released only by the law.

In answer to this, it is asked, whether a person is not at liberty to give his substance to another, or recede from his claims? No, not in the case of a fraudulent bankruptcy. A Frenchman cannot stop the course of justice against his servant who has robbed me; and why then should I be allowed to acquit a tradesman who has imbezzled his substance? It is lawful to give,
but

CHINESE SPY. I, I

but not to compound for a robbery; which is felony against the law, and breach of the public order.

The Europeans are strangers to any such thoughts; accordingly trade among them is little better than larceny.

LETTER LV.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, at Paris.

Bologna.

IT is now some time since I have been in the country of the popes, the city of cardinals, the seat of priests, and the seminary of fingers.

The soil of Bologna is fruitful to exuberance. China excepted, the whole earth has nothing like it.

There is a commerce in this city, which I never heard of among any people in the world: the Africans make a traffic of men, but the Bolognese trade in dogs.

This is a large well-paved city, full of churches, and colleges, and doctors. The natives instead of a language, express themselves by gestures and a kind of jargon,

gon, with which those who understand it are much diverted.

Bologna, as it were, owes a buffoon to every theatre in Italy; a comedy would not take, without a Bologna doctor.

Besides buffoons, here are also great numbers of monks. Its convents are the largest monastical barracks in all Christendom. Some are even like towns; and so many are there of these towns, that, take them away, Bologna would be no more than a village.

Its school of morality is far from being in such repute as its school of painting. The Bolognese make no account of the knowledge of men, but apply themselves intirely to copy their faces.

A father, with two sons, disposes of one to the idleness of Bologna, and the other he sends to the intrigues of Rome. The former ruins his family, whilst the other, in a continual progress, shall make his way through the crowd of the sacred college to the *tiara*, and, in thirty years after, raises his family again: at the second generation it receives a second fall, and is again raised by a church-man.

The Bologna nobility is the most ancient by the church, and the most modern by

by the sword. The records are filled with titles derived from the triple crown and the purple.

It is very numerous; for every Bolognese pope, besides five or six princes, creates twenty or thirty nobles. In other states of Europe, the series of ancestors is required to nobility; but here a conclave will do.

A man, very far from being noble himself, can, by the operation of the holy spirit, ennoble a crowd of plebeians. A mendicant monk, who has solemnly renounced titles and ranks, no sooner comes to be pope, than he makes gentlemen of all kinds.

Women also attain to nobility by the church: the intrigues of cardinals with them purify their descent: they would be much more noble, were popes made in their younger years; but they are so decrepit at their creation, that they are no longer able to confer nobility on women.

This is the country of debauchery, music, and devotion. Six hours of the day are spent in praying, eight in singing, and ten in prostitution.

Every corner of the street is an altar,
every

every altar has an image, and every image performs miracles.

LETTER LVI.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Superintendant of Religion at Peking.

Paris.

THERE was formerly a terrible circumstance in the christian religion. Believers, who had sinned, though but slightly, were condemned to eternal burnings: this was very hard for those who had not sinned on purpose. After many deliberations, about an expedient for preventing such numbers of well-meaning sinners from being hurled down to hell for ever, purgatory was hit on.

I wish I could explain to you what this same purgatory is. The Europeans, who are full of fictions in all things, have a fable of the river called Lethe, the water of which makes one forget every thing that is past. Now purgatory is a kind of river Lethe; God forgets that he was offended, and expunges his justice. Purgatory may be also looked on as a protest

test for sinners against the power of the devil.

It is very hot in purgatory, but far less than in hell. Its flames burn, but without consuming; they are only of a purifying quality. At the end of some centuries, the sinner comes out as clear as crystal, and goes and takes his seat in heaven, as if nothing had been the matter.

Christianity has scarce a project which comes up to this: at the end of the world, God would otherwise have been almost alone in paradise; whereas purgatory is continually supplying it with elect.

It is pity such a glorious plan should have any thing mercenary in it; but purgatory must be purchased; and the bonzes and ecclesiastical mandarins have set two prices: they, who are afraid of being burnt, buy it outright, and are released almost in an instant; but to go thus directly to heaven, with only being singed in their flight through purgatory, requires a large sum: I have been told, that some half-reprobate christians have paid above fifty thousand taels to redeem themselves from these purifying flames.

As to those who cannot purchase a de-

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liverance,

liverance, they quietly broil from generation to generation.

Not a few European philosophers have represented riches as of little or no value; but it must be owned, that the institution of purgatory has made them good for something.

Every body is a gainer in this market. Continual collections are making for the souls in purgatory; and those christians who side with the pope, are continually giving alms. Boxes set up for this purpose fill every day; but the souls in purgatory see little of the money. Lastly, pagods, from being very poor, since the invention of purgatory, are grown excessively opulent.

This institution, however, is only for venial sins; had a purgatory been likewise erected for the mortal, it would then have been a good thing to be a christian. Such an institution is a rare encouragement for the sinners of this sect. What matters it to offend the Supreme Being? Money will keep one from going to hell.

Perhaps, there are not in the world greater calculators than the Europeans. I have been told of a computation, containing the number of souls rescued from
the

the flames of purgatory since the institution thereof: the number is immense, and consists of christians of all ranks, callings, and conditions, except popes, except kings, except ministers of state, except monks, except financiers, except devotees; all these folks go directly to hell.

LETTER LVII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at Peking.

Paris.

THE ministers of state in France are ever tottering; they are never seen to stand firm on their feet. On my arrival at Paris two happened to be displaced, and soon after, three were made. No lodging-house in the whole city shifts masters oftener than that of the comptroller of the finances. A minister is scarce warm in his post before he must quit it to another, who himself must soon make room for a third. They, as it were, meet one another on the stair-case of administration.

The king of France seems to be ever reviewing his ministers; and these, as it

were, only pass through their offices. Thou must well think how public affairs go amidst such continual changes : the leading men being never fixed in their posts, the state must always be on the totter.

It is nothing uncommon to hear of the removal of a minister before his promotion was known. Accordingly, it is customary to go and compliment him on it in the morning, lest the afternoon should be too late. On the day that the present head of the treasury was nominated, a nobleman of his acquaintance drove without delay to his hotel in order to wish him joy. Pray, said he, to the porter, is your master still minister? The man, who as yet had heard nothing of it, made answer, it was more than he knew. You will see, said he, turning to another nobleman in his chariot, that he will be dismissed before he is well made.

As every body here knows, that a minister going into power is to make but a short stay there, they take their measures accordingly. Every one is urgent for favours, and the minister, sensible that his dismissal is at hand, makes the best of his time. Why should he be at the pains to examine into capacity, recompense talents,

talents, and bestow employments only on merit, as he knows that a few days will put a period to his power, and it will scarce be remembered that he ever existed? Nay, what is more, he finds the affairs of the monarchy embarrassed, and he entangles them still more, that his successor may be the harder put to it to unravel them: this is his revenge for the instability of his post.

LETTER LVIII.

The Same, to the Same, at Peking.

Paris.

THE depravation of manners in France is monstrous. A crime daily committed here, which nature shudders at, is the highest pitch of human corruption. In Africa, fathers are said to sell their children to labour; here, mothers sell their daughters for prostitution: they themselves make the unnatural bargain, and pocket the gain of their crime.

In Barbary, a great number of children is a fund of wealth to parents; and, in

France, the mother of several daughters makes a good fortune of them.

Education and talents are the usual foundations of this infamous contract. The view in bringing them up well, is, that they may sell the better. The more beauty and accomplishments, the higher price is put on their innocence.

The police is acquainted with these bargains, and all the judges and magistrates are not ignorant of them; they are known to every body, yet no-body opens his mouth about them.

Fail not to burn this letter; for I would not have it known in our country, that there are such monsters on the earth. Among depraved people there are crimes, of which wise governments should not have the very least idea: shewing human nature to them in so hideous a character would give them too ill an opinion of it, and thus they might come to lose the confidence due to virtue.

L E T-

L E T T E R LIX.

The Same to the Same, at Peking.

Paris.

OF all the sciences professed in France, politics come cheapest; nay, so very cheap, that every footman can purchase it. For two sous you are informed of the interests of princes, with the negotiations all over Europe, and know twice a week how the world goes.

The principles of this science are contained in half-sheets of paper, called Gazettes. Its usual lectures are held in little academies, at the gates of the Palais-royal, and the Thuilleries, where porters sell the sagacity of courts. He, who is for being very knowing in the secrets of cabinets, and to this purpose reads many papers, pays the more; for politics have a settled price, so much the half-sheet. In these Lycæums the students are punctually informed of what is not doing in the several courts, and they read just quite other things than what they would know.

Most of those Gazettes come from

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abroad;

abroad; the chief professors in politics reside in Holland, a thrifty republic making an advantage of common report, and so industrious as to profit by lying. From thence it is, that the adepts communicate to the other European nations their extensive learning, and acute reflections.

All these papers are noted for a peculiar kind of erudition. The Amsterdam Gazette, which takes the lead of the others, is very profound in the superficialities of facts, and full of an elocution most methodically tiresome; the Hague Gazette cannot be too much admired for its imaginary events; that of Rotterdam is distinguished for lying; and that of Utrecht for not telling truth. But, for false and fictitious occurrences, the *Avignon Courier* beats them all. The writer is an apostate bonze, and twice a week constantly vends his apostasies in this paper. There is likewise the French Gazette, but the government forbids it to speak truth; it is dull and insipid by command.

I have been informed, that once a resolution had been taken against foreign Gazettes being brought into the kingdom; but it was not put in execution, probably from the government's having reflected

ed on the consequences of such a measure. Certain it is, that such a prohibition would have occasioned one of the greatest revolutions ever known in the French monarchy: for what then would have become of such numbers of *automata* in Paris, those machines whose springs are inactive till some article in the news-papers sets them in motion? It would have been cutting asunder the thread of public discourse, and imposing an irksome silence on all the coffee-house politicians.

Farther, this prohibition would have starved not a few old officers, who, having picked up, at one of the above-mentioned little academies, an article of some little consequence, immediately repair to well-provided houses, where their news is paid them down in a dinner.

It would have been striking France dumb; for what could have been found to replace these words, so trite in all companies, and with which all French conversations open, *What news? What does the Dutch Gazette say? How go the armies on?*

One cannot forbear lamenting the imbecillity of mankind, in seeing a nation, which is reckoned to have its full share of wit, genius, and discernment, reduced

to pass away its days in talking of such futilities.

Thou canst not imagine the yawning and wearisomeness here in the want of the Dutch, Flanders, or Avignon mails; as if the snow or ice, which hinders the coming of the post, froze up wit at Paris; for frozen it is as hard as a stone, and the thaw does not come on till the arrival of the Gazettes, and then the ice dissolves instantaneously.

L E T T E R L X.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

NONE of the buildings shewn here to foreigners escaped my curiosity; but there is no visiting them without a guide. A stranger must lose himself, as I may say, in the streets of apartments, and the different quarters, of which these houses consist. Some are so immensely vast, that they would contain an African kingdom with all its people.

These prodigious structures put me often on reflecting how much men endeavour to depart from their primary origin.

The

The first men, probably, made a cave in the ground, to secure themselves against the wild beasts ; and this might, for some time, have been their usual dwelling. Their numbers increasing, they took mud, and built a hut : the first huts may be supposed not to have been bigger than to contain a middling family ; but they soon proceeded to raise a second above the first, and that served as a foundation for the third ; till, as conveniences led to the invention of elegancies and enjoyments, and these are productive of luxury, huts gradually became edifices : what had been invented for ease caused fatigue : men, made to dwell on the surface of the earth, were obliged to go half way up to heaven to get into their houses. Marble and stone were made subservient to human vanity, and men, who were to die in a few years, built dwellings to last a thousand.

At present, private persons in France have mansions like those of kings, and kings like those of the Gods.

I would suppress all parade and magnificence, except in public edifices ; those of the subjects should be under regulation. This police would be found more useful than is at first apprehended : among
several

several other advantages, would be this, that private persons could not then bury themselves, and all their generation, in overgrown buildings.

L E T T E R LXI.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, at Paris.

Bologna.

BOLOGNA is under the direct dominion of heaven; it has Christ's deputy for sovereign. It is with the keys of paradise that the popes open the door of this political power.

Could men bring themselves to agree, they would be free; whereas, through their variances, they are generally slaves. Of this, almost every occurrence in the history of Europe is an instance.

The Bolognese, disgusted at a sovereignty of their own, put themselves under that of the pope. For a political state to submit itself, of its own accord and deliberately, to such an ignominy, argues extreme corruption.

I have

I have often wondered, how it comes that the people of Italy, for near fifteen hundred years past, have run headlong into slavery: it must be in a great measure owing, I believe, to luxury, sloth, and effeminacy.

The Romans disturbed the world, and afterwards themselves, by infinite toils and astonishing expeditions: a general weariness followed on the heels of those agitations. The Italian nations, their successors, set up the arts of pageantry and ostentation, the natural consequence of voluptuousness. The only ambition then was, to be idle. The maintenance of freedom requires activity; whereas, to be slaves, one need not stir a finger.

A people is ignorant of its interest, when, terrified at its own divisions and civil wars, it gives itself up to a foreign potentate. In so doing, it runs into those misfortunes which it was for avoiding. Those terrifying wars are what alone can save it from being subdued. The history of this part of the globe shews most states springing up again from the ashes of civil contentions.

Bologna, indeed, at resigning itself to the pope, retained its privileges; but
when

when a state gives itself up to a foreign government, there is an end of all privileges.

The cession of the political power annuls all reserve of prerogatives.

A people voluntarily submitting to servitude, generally would be ignorant that they are slaves.

The republic of Bologna affects to be free, and, as a shew of equality, sends an ambassador to Rome, whilst, at the same time, the pontiff sends thither a legate, who is her master.

Forty senators form a senate without counsel, which elects a prince without power. This sovereign is stiled *Gonfalonier*. His reign is as short as his authority is limited: after sixty days he lays down his crown, and becomes a subject again. The election, instead of being arbitrary, goes by rotation; every senator being, in his turn, a prince for six months. It is not merit which promotes to this dignity, but a feat; every seven years, each senator seats himself on this mock-throne.

LETTER LXII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Cotaoyu-se, at Pekin.

Paris.

I Am often at the play-house, but not so much from any liking to theatrical plays, as to see that which the audience acts. This, to me, is much more entertaining than what passes on the stage, being always original, and exhibiting the national ridicules. It begins a long time before the curtain rises, and continues half an hour after its fall: that is, this play has two acts more than that which the company comes to see.

It is generally the pit which opens this exhibition, and in a manner that one would think it made of clock-work with a regulated motion. It has its flow and ebb, like the ocean: one wave drives the spectators towards the orchestra, and another carries them back to the door. The movers of the waves are usually young musqueteers, with whom this is a mighty diversion. They open and shut the pit like
a box:

a box: I lately saw two country gentlemen so hustled about, that I believe they will not be able to stir out of their rooms these six months. If any one happens to be in the pit in the midst of a knot of those gentry, he may bless his stars if he gets out with all his limbs.

But this is only a prelude to the audience-play: it consists of dumb conversation in the boxes. That evening the first scene began with a young lady: an abbé had been her favourite; but the ungrateful creature contracted another clandestine match with a lady, who was also that night in the boxes. The two rivals a long time threatened each other with their eyes: the looks of one betrayed implacable rage and malice; whilst the other insulted with the most lively expression of joy and triumph. This physiognomical contest continued some time, when the pretty rivals proceeded to gestures, grimaces, and flirts of the fan.

In the mean time, the abbé's hands, which till then had been in sight, suddenly disappeared; yet the abbé was still present: that they were out of the box could not be thought, but undoubtedly they

they were hid somewhere. Here the forsaken lady could not conceal her indignation: her looks strongly spoke; they said to the spectators with an impassioned emphasis, See that perfidious wretch! he carries his contempt of me so far, as thus publicly to indulge his passion: then, there's a woman! was ever there any thing so indecent! she minds nothing but her inordinate appetite. This very moment she is perhaps enjoying a thousand little sensations, by way of preparation to a greater pleasure after the play; for French women, only by the motion of the eyes, can make a connected speech, with all its *parentheses*. The Parisian pit cannot endure inactivity; understanding this silent elocution, they set about revenging the fair petitioner, calling out, No smuggling, Mr. Abbé! Up with your hands! Out hands! — and immediately his hands appeared.

Near this box, another play was acting. A stale, but rich widow, fancying she had captivated an officer, whose commission was his whole substance, discovered that night, by an ogle of his, that his design was on her young and pretty daughter. This preference so incensed the

the mother, that she cashiered him immediately, in the eyes of the whole audience. The officer, far from being dejected at his dismissal, seeing himself without employment, went and offered his services in another box, to a lady who had no daughter. Immediately the pit applauded his choice by a general clap, and hissed the stale widow. Then there were not less than four dumb scenes at this second exhibition; the old widow's rancour, the daughter's chagrin, the young lady's pleasure, and the officer's satisfaction. Besides these continual comedies, there are interludes without number, of spectators going and coming, clambering up or throwing themselves down from one box to another. You see them in the first, at the same time in the second, and in the twinkling of an eye they are got up in the third: this part of the audience-play might be called the tumbling-scene.

LETTER LXIII.

*The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at
Pekin.*

Paris.

THE European world springs from two stems: society here is divided into noble and ignoble; though very little is required to be of the first class: a family, by getting its name written in the annals of the world, becomes noble; and that, which has forgot this circumstance, remains ignoble. It is memory which gives the turn.

Any one, proving that his ancestors lived nine hundred years ago, is indisputably a gentleman; and he, who can make no such proof, is no gentleman. Thus thou seest, that there is no difference between a gentleman and another, both having had ancestors of nine hundred years standing, and that the whole merit consists in remembering it. However, another way has been invented, which is, to forget it. An European, who can prove his family to be of such antiquity,
that

that all traces of it are lost, is noble and most noble. An origin lying beyond the reach of recollection is concluded, of a certainty, to be more than vulgar or common. At this rate, the world itself is a thorough gentleman, the time of its formation being far from certain. For the same reason all men must be so; for, if the stem be noble, the branches must of course partake of its nobility.

A very important circumstance of this point is, the producing an old worm-eaten piece of parchment: the difference between sterling nobility and the falsified, lies chiefly in the difficulty of reading the patents: that which can scarce be decyphered, shews the nobility genuine; whereas one which can be read fluently, is dubious. The falsities contained in the parchment must be of an antient date, for in genealogy no credit is given to modern lies. An imposture of a hundred years is too recent; whereas one of six centuries strikes with respect: no body offers to dispute its authenticity.

France has a nobility which I highly esteem; it is that of fine actions. Merit should in equity be honoured, and citizens, who have done important services

to

to their country, be distinguished; but so it is, that this sacred source of real nobility, from the many wretched abuses of it, does more harm than good. Five or six memorable services, done by the ancestors of a noble family, generally render their successors useless members of a state. Inflated with this honour, they imagine, that, by virtue of the glorious actions of their predecessors, they may spend their days in indolence.

A person, whom I meet here in my visits, who spends his life between the public walks and coffee-houses, the gaming-table, theatre, and worse places, gave me lately to know that he was noble; and in proof that he was so, he related many great achievements of his ancestors, named to me the battles where they had distinguished themselves, and related some prodigies of courage, which had gained them immortal glory. And, Sir, said I, interrupting him, what part had you in all those celebrated exploits? Why, none at all, answered he; how could I? And how can you arrogate to yourself the merit of actions which you did not perform?

Here

Here they are always confounding the origin of nobility with the nobles, though two very different things. To preserve nobility from degenerating, it should be only for life. A citizen, who has done great services to the state, or who has distinguished himself by some personal merit of public utility, should be noble to the hour of his death. A hero, at his departure out of the world, should carry all his honours with him, nothing remaining behind but the fame of his actions: his tomb should be as a barrier between him and his descendants. All antient patents I would have abolished; the claim to nobility should be personal merit: every citizen should be the first descendant of his race, and the last noble of his family.

L E T T E R LXIV.

The Same, to the Same, at Peking.

Paris.

SINCE my last, I was reflecting on the inconveniences of the nobility being so very numerous in France, when a man of a shabby appearance came into my

my room: Sir, said he, after two or three low bows, I come to offer to make you noble. Me noble! cried I, and pray by what authority? By my profession, answered he, I am a genealogist; I make origins; my trade is gentility. That would be impossible in my case, replied I; none of my ancestors ever made any noise in the world: they are all dead, without having been so much as perceived to live. That's nothing; I have ennobled those, whose ancestors were the quietest people on earth; they made no more noise among the living than if they had been dead. I conclude, you don't know that I am a Chinese. Yes, I do, says he, and it is on that very account I come to offer you my service. I have a Chinese genealogy already to ennoble you. And from whom will you derive my descent? said I. From the great Confucius, answered he; for I will ennoble you to some purpose, and not by halves, as every day I do Frenchmen; who, as they cannot afford to purchase an antient nobility, take up with a petty country gentleman for a founder. The origin you talk of, said I, appears to me a difficult point. O! I daily draw out much more difficult. A
descent

descent from Confucius is nothing, in comparison of those plebeians whom nothing will satisfy under an ancestor or two of the order of the Holy Ghost, and whom I must ennoble from amidst the rubbish of their forefathers. You will be highly pleased with my genealogical table: it deduces the male and female branches down to yourself; and Confucius is the stem: he shall be the first branch of your family, and you the last. I hope this genealogical tree will do you no less honour than myself: it is a masterly piece, and yet will cost you but a hundred crowns: this is, now a days, a settled price; a plebeian pays it down without a word.

You must be very rich, said I, to the man? Our profession, answered he, was formerly pretty good; but the king's turning genealogist has hurt us very much. This monarch, without having ever studied our science, has found out a secret of giving ancestors to those who have none. Behold the force of conceit! We make nobles for ten louis-d'ors, and with the king it costs above twenty thousand livres; yet the people go to him, preferably to us. A very irrational preference, indeed, said I to the genealogist; it is
wrong

wrong to have recourse to the monarch, when you are so very reasonable in your demands. O, very wrong, replied he; and after all he knows no more of heraldry than we do; and our letters of nobility are as good as his, perhaps even better; for his always begin at the sixteen partitions, whereas our's finish them. Mr. Ennobler, replied I, has the sovereign deprived you of all your customers? No, no, answered he, we have still a great many left. The excise and finances still afford a comfortable subsistence to a great number of our profession at Paris. Here is a list of ignobles, continued he, taking a paper out of his pocket, whom I have ennobled only this year; and began to read it aloud: *Ten farmers general, twenty clerks of the taxes, thirty receivers of the finances, forty retail tradesmen, six house-stewards, twelve footmen, &c. &c.* all these new-made nobles are so many master-pieces in genealogy. The stem of both males and females was so eaten up with the rust of abasement, that there was no such thing as furbishing them; so I even patched them up with apocryphal vouchers.

Those of the clerk of the taxes took me up above six months in cleaning; and af-

ter all I could make but a dullish kind of nobility of them. That of the receivers was also a knotty business; but I thought the nobilitation of the tradesmen would have turned my brains. The mean origin of the stewards engaged me in laborious investigations: the easiest part was with the footmen; of all this factitious nobleſſe, the livery has the leaſt of vulgarity.

Still the moſt difficult point is, not ſo much the nobilitation of theſe people, as to give them arms; for where can a coat be found for them? It is not conceivable, what pains I have been at in this particular: as to the financiers indeed, I ſoon ſtruck out one pretty ſignificant to them; mountains, *or*, in a field, *argent*.

Another difficulty I have with theſe plebeians is, that coronets will not ſatisfy them; they muſt have crowns for ſooth! now how, in the name of goodneſs, ſhould I bring families of clerks and footmen into a conſanguinity with thoſe of ſovereigns? As to thoſe who are for having lilies in their ſhield, that is ſoon accommodated, moſt having them on their ſhoulders*. This is what in heraldry we call ſpeaking arms. Is

* In France petty criminals are burned in the ſhoulders with the mark of a flower-de-luce.

Is it only men of fortune, said I, who are fond of being ennobled? Most of the French affect it, answered he; the very poets put in for nobility; but here the genealogist has the devil and all to do, these creatures being all plebeians, from father to son, ever since the deluge.

The very players also are for shaking off their mean extraction: it is not long since I made an actor at the opera noble: indeed he was issued from Orpheus, and had acted so many parts of kings and emperors, that he was already illustrious.

You seem, Mr. Genealogist, to carry on your business with a great deal of facility. Not so much as you think. Sometimes (allow me the expression) we must scratch our heads: the philosophers cut us out a plaguy deal of work: where are we to find nobility for wretches, who never had house nor home, sprung from a cask, the mansion of Diogenes, and he a boasted ancestor of their's?

We also must thresh very hard to give a lustre to the mean extraction of the military knights of St. Lewis, whose origin generally is as obscure as the sources of the Nile.

We are given to hope, that we shall soon nobilitate the knights of Malta, who

begin to grow so ignoble, that they will very soon stand in need of a genealogist in ordinary.

I thanked the noble maker, and desired to be excused from having the divine Confucius's family confounded with mine.

LETTER LXV.

The Same, to the Superintendant of Religion at Peking.

Paris.

AMONG the Christians *, my dear Kie-tou-na, paradise may be purchased. The mandarins of this sect dispose of it; but the price is not always the same, varying according to the want of money in the market of religion: they, who are for coming at it cheap, go a from shop to shop, and haggle long time.

In this they are not to be blamed, it being allowable for every one to get things as cheap as they can. I have been told of a sinner, who, intending to purchase heaven, applied to a convent of bonzes: they rated it at a hundred thousand masses: that he thought by much too dear, and
went

* The Roman Catholics.

went away to other bonzes at Paris, who are noted for supplying sinners at a reasonable rate. Accordingly, they immediately fell one half, and offered him heaven for fifty thousand masses, but paid down in current specie. This was a great saving to him; yet, grudging so much money for heaven, he declined it, and tried other bonzes; but, like the first, they insisted on the full price. Not being able to suit himself, he determined to wait a more favourable opportunity; for in this sale, as in others, there are seasons, when traders fall their prices. Amidst his inquiries after the cheapest way to avoid being damned, he was informed, that the Capuchin bonzes, being about rebuilding their pagod, stood in need of money: he went to them, and they did his business for six thousand masses.

He is determined to prosecute the first bonzes, as usurers, for asking twenty times more for a thing than its worth, or than others value it at. Should he gain his suit, and obtain six thousand masses costs, this would be no bad trick in him, as then getting paradise just for nothing.

LETTER LXVI.

*The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at
Pekin.*

Paris.

DID the exiled ministers here continue to enjoy the infatuated veneration paid to them before, I should account their dismissal a reward. Their rank, title, and fortune, are intirely left to them: instead of being removed from the scene of their grandeur, it follows them into their recess. Whatever branch of their fastuousness they think fit to leave behind, their cook they never forget: thus, amidst high living and a continual resort of company, they make moral reflections on the misfortune they are fallen under, of being much happier than they were before.

About twenty years ago, here was a little obscure abbé, without rank or dignity, and his whole fortune but a hundred taels a year. Some women having introduced him at court, he was making his way very rapidly there; but in the midst of
his

his career, his ambition overturned him. He was dismissed and exiled ; however, without touching his dignity and fortune ; so that in his disgrace he was possessed of two hundred thousand livres a year, and all his several benefices, besides the purple. Now, what could have been done more, if, instead of punishing him, it had been intended to reward him ?

The exile of ministers in France betrays a defect in the prince's clemency, or in his justice. He has either too much generosity, or is wanting in equity. If they have injured the state, and made an ill use of their ministry, they are not duly punished ; whereas, if they are innocent, and no malversation can be laid to their charge, they are punished too much. On inquiring into the origin of the exile of ministers, it appears to be a *succedaneum* to the penalty of death, commuted through clemency. Banishment being a civil death, they, who are condemned to it, should be stripped of their dignities, honours, and enjoyments ; for what have the dead to do with pageantry ? Nothing is necessary to them but a grave.

LETTER LXVII.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

THE other day I took a dinner with a French nobleman, who has an estate of two hundred thousand livres a year, and is four millions in debt, which just makes him a nobleman without estate: yet he lives at the rate of two hundred thousand livres a year.

This person, who with all his opulence cannot afford to have a footman, keeps forty domestics, a steward and clerk of the kitchen, pages, grooms, dogs, and horses; and few noblemen have a finer table: he treats with the best wines in Europe; his equipages are all very rich; he goes abroad in a prince-like splendor, so that none but a conjurer could think him poorer than most of those whom he spatters.

I have calculated his expence, and find, that, should this nobleman live ten years longer, he will die six millions in debt; and then the young lord, his son, accounted a very rich heir, will be a hundred thousand

thousand livres *per annum* worse than nothing.

This rich nobleman is far from being the only poor one in Paris ; it is the case of three fourths of the rich here ; in the midst of their supposititious opulence, their natural state is indigence. The cause of their not being aware that they have not wherewith to live, is, that they, to whom they are indebted, allow them to live. A general meeting of creditors would reduce above half the great men to beggary : should all, to whom they owe, insist on being paid, the towering edifice of their fortune would fall to pieces ; at best, would be contracted to a cottage.

I have been assured that the nobility of France, who have generally large estates, owe more than the real value of them : if so, the most wealthy body in the state is the poorest. The noblemen are properly no more than farmers of their lands, holding them under creditors, who, by the ready way they opened to them of contracting debts, are become proprietors of their estates. Should the names of those, to whom their fiefs now belong, be inserted in their antient patents, instead of those to whom they no longer be-

long; then would the commoners be nobles, and the nobles commoners.

This ruining themselves was not projected by the great men; they never would have thought of it, had not the court been the first to set them an example. It is a phrenzy derived in a right line from the prince, who is reckoned the most necessitous rich man in his kingdom. The present monarch's predecessor taught the nobility to contract debts, and run themselves into difficulties, he himself borrowing from all who would lend: accordingly, that great prince broke for the greatest sum ever known: he was so poor at his death, as not to leave wherewith to be buried, by two thousand millions.

LETTER LXVIII.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, at Paris.

Bologna.

THE Bolognese women are generally pretty; but too near an approach to them makes still greater impression than

than love : you must keep at some distance from their faces, ever so little familiarity with their beauty causing excrescences on the skin, which are attended with a smart itching. Thus their charms wound the skin more than the heart : however, setting aside this *pruritus*, they are perfectly agreeable.

I could have wished they had spoke Arabic, to have had some talk with them. Arabic may be sooner learnt than the Bolognese idiom. I know something of Italian ; but that's out of the question at Bologna, being used only by preachers and players.

The women and men meet every evening in by-places called *Cassini*. I scarce know how to go about explaining to you what a *Cassino* is ; it is not directly a brothel, though the same things are frequently done there ; in a word, it is a house hired by a certain number of men and women, to be more at liberty.

The French, who improve every thing, have not yet attained to this refinement of indecency : it must be owned, that, as to corruption of manners, the Italians have always taken the lead of the French.

L E T T E R L X I X .

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Cotao-yu-se, at Peking.

Paris.

TH E French will, at any rate, have wit: you are welcome to sense, capacity, and erudition, if you will but allow them vivacity, keenness of repartees, and gayety. A Frenchman, with fire, imagination, and a knack at story-telling, and an inexhaustible fluency in small-talk, bids fair for the character of a wit; and, if to these qualities he adds laughter at command, a vein of jocularitv, and sportive carriage, his merit is signed and sealed.

A Frenchman must have nothing serious about him; a composed look here is accounted sourness; at Paris a grave man is the most stupid creature in nature.

I was lately at a supper with a mixed company of Parisians and foreigners; which gave me an opportunity of observing the contrariety between this people and their neighbours.

Come,

Come, my lord, says a French wit, jogging a sensible Englishman who sat next to him, think to-morrow, and be merry to-day. What signifies, continued he, all your geometry, knowledge, and erudition, while you know not how to make use of them? See what wit we Frenchmen have! As for example, we have been talking away these four hours, without your having the least thought that we have not been reflecting.

It is not given to every nation in Europe to carry the erudition of trifles to such a pitch, and to be so deeply versed in the science of levity: this is the peculiar talent of a native Frenchman.

This humour of wit affects all ranks and conditions here; it even has got footing in the ministry.

I may be mistaken, but I cannot help thinking, that the French would make greater advancements in arts and sciences, and politics, had they a little less wit.

Especially, let it be utterly excluded from religion; it was the source of those disputes, which occasioned the intestine wars, so fatal to the state.

I would likewise banish it out of the verge of government; for from thence it
is,

is, that its bad influence has spread among the subjects.

I am even of opinion, that were there not so much wit in the sovereign's council, the state would be the better governed.

LETTER LXX.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at Pekin.

Paris.

THERE are some topics which I am obliged to return to, it being impossible to go through them in one letter. I have said elsewhere, that here a woman is always hidden behind a man: she shoves him forwards, draws him back, and makes him stand still, according to her drifts and designs. Politics, like the other systems of civil society, are under the direction of this sex.

It is said, that France has taken part in the present war, merely because a woman would have it so; and probably her only motive for this was, to make herself of the greater importance by nominating

nating to military employments. Five or six hundred thousand men have been given up to tragical deaths, to entertain a lady with a war.

Justice, here, is of so fine a texture, that a pretty woman can crush it at pleasure; the law flies out of court at the sight of a beautiful sollicitress. The sex distributes the principal posts of the church and the law. Priories, abbies, bishopricks, cardinals hats, are under their dependency. Were France to nominate a pope, he would be made by a woman: they make viceroys, governors of provinces; and of them brigadiers and generals of armies hold their commissions. There's not a commissioner in the kingdom who does not owe his post to a woman.

The government here has an established custom, which all the world is apprised of: when a man has any business at court, or in the town, he must find out the name and place of abode of the judge's female favourite who is to decide it, in order to apply to her, and gain her by presents. Every other way to carry a cause is very uncertain; whereas this is sure. A petition delivered by the favourite is always answered. As to the rate, in the sale of justice,

tice, it is fixed at so much *per cent.* though it rises in proportion to the iniquity of the case. Every woman in favour has her department: some deal in pensions, others in employments; they have their offices for giving audiences, and receiving memorials.

The way of insuring the purchase-price of the favour, or of the injustice, petitioned for, is really excellent; the money is lodged with a public mandarin, called a notary, who does not deliver it to the favourite till she has gone through with the affair.

It would be a great mistake, shouldest thou imagine these favourites to be young persons of extraordinary beauty: some of them are old matrons, and very far from having any thing of handsomeness in them: the title and perquisites of favourites are allowed them as a reward for past services, and in discharge of an old debt, contracted with them in the flower of their age.

The young favourites, who are in current pay, equip themselves in all the power of dress, when they go to present any brief; and the affair is concerted in a private conference with the minister or judge.

But

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But these several private offices have for some years past been reduced to one ; the royal favourite has swallowed up all ! Versailles is now the place where payments of any consequence are made. Posts are there sold by public auction, and every one who has money is allowed to bid. The office of intelligence is open to all ; and, at present, bargains are made there for employments, from a hundred crowns to two hundred thousand livres a year.

LETTER LXXI.

*The Same, to the Mandarin Cotaoyu-se,
at Peking.*

Paris.

LOVE, which must have been very old and battered since it lived in the time of Cyrus and Cassandra *, died suddenly here ; debauchery has proved the death of it. At present it is a point of gentility to despise that passion. To be suspected of such a weakness ruins a man's character : it only subsists among the old-fashioned

* Two old romances.

fashioned folks ; so that the courtiers, and people of fashion, scorn it as boyish.

Sighs and love-letters are no more heard of ; those modes of explaining one's self are antiquated.

But there being ever some women, who still follow the old way, a fashionable Frenchman always keeps a domestic to answer love-letters ; so that this part of the secretaryship of the heart is now in such disrepute as to be committed to a valet.

Love has not so much as a place in the romances ; a kind of books originally consisting of the analysis of it, and the substance of which was its follies ; but now in France there is no more love, not even in fiction.

However, so much the better ; for, after all, love was come to be mere cheating. It has been superseded by intrigue, which, to speak the truth, is not much better, except that now every body knows what he is about. Both parties frankly deceive each other ; whereas, in love, they generally deceived each other without being sensible of it ; not to mention the trouble of love itself, and the infinite pains which must be taken to please the beloved object.

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It was farther attended with a multitude of most troublesome formalities. Immediately, they were mutually to assure each other of an eternal love; both were to seem to believe each other; next, they were jointly to labour to persuade themselves of it; afterwards, they were to give convincing proofs of it: now all this required great assiduity and address. Nor is this all: the suitor was to be habitually engaging, sweet-tempered, polite, complaisant, watchful to seize every opportunity of obliging: now this must have been a very great restraint.

Intrigue is perfectly plain and simple, goes directly to the point without the tediousness of preliminaries, or the delays of circumlocution. An intrigue of eight days standing is reckoned old: intrigue may be said to be without a beginning, for it begins at the end; which is very convenient for those who hate loitering.

I forgot to tell thee of another inconvenience in love: it always was at a great deal of pains to conceal itself, whereas the present mode of intrigue goes bare-faced.

L E T-

LETTER LXXII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at Peking.

Paris.

ALL the time I have been at Paris, I never heard a single word about the queen of France: though I mentioned, in one of my letters, that the monarch reigning here is married, I cannot tell whether he has a wife. Yet I have been assured that France had a queen; but she makes so little noise as not to be heard. She is never seen in the king's council or cabinet. So far from dazzling any one with her splendor, she has not a ray of light near her. Magnificence is not her sphere; she is out of the bustle of this showy court. She has left the high-way of grandeur for the path of privacy; she has resigned her life with dignity; she has laid down her rank at the altar; and God, to whom she has offered up her crown, has richly compensated her for such a glorious sacrifice, changing her afflictions into solacements: and very hap-

py

py is this for the king and the state. There are queens in Europe, whom, in such circumstances, religion would not have made so very easy.

L E T T E R LXXIII.

The Same, to the Same, at Peking.

Paris.

HERE is a minister * who has survived all the others without disgrace, or exile. Being a lover of the fair sex, and of an easy turn of mind, he struck in with her who governed the state. The marchioness's gown had saved him from shipwreck ; her protection is the plank to which he owes his safety.

At present he drivels, and is no longer the same man ; but, before he became civilly dead, he was the minister, of all France, who knew the most and the least. He has passed through all degrees, and likewise through all the honours which the greatest man of the republic can expect. He has been an ambassador plenipotentiary, a general officer, and is a knight of all

* The late marshal Belleisle.

all the king's orders, a marshal of France, a duke, &c. Had the favours, conferred on him for services which he has not performed, been withheld, they might have very well rewarded twenty brave officers for services which they had really performed.

I have heard there is not his fellow in the world for wasting a large army in a foreign country, for posting it amiss, making it advance when it should draw back, and for ordering it to retire as injudiciously, in a word, for thoroughly ruining it, and then returning to court almost alone. He is highly praised for an orderly retreat he made; but the having once turned his back prudently, is no very shining article in the history of a general.

His master-piece lay in details: never did commander's head contain so many *minutiae*. In Europe, most men are misplaced. This marshal duke would have made an incomparable director of the forage; not a truss of hay would have escaped him; whereas, he is put at the head of the war-office. This indeed has its details; but wide is the difference between the details of small matters and of great; and the contracted speculations about the subsistence of

of armies are not to come into competition with the elevated genius required in those who conduct military operations. Accordingly, he is said to have spun a fine thread there in that post.

Though something turned of seventy, he still sets up for a beau and gallant. This weakness, however, is overlooked; but what is insupportable in him, is his conceiting himself equal to the weight which crushes him.

This minister's dignities will end in him, he having no issue: he is the first general of his family, and the last duke. It is said that he will make Lewis XV. his heir: his riches are indeed immense; yet it will be no gift, but only rather the discharge of a family-debt: a grandfather plundered the state, and the grandson makes restitution.

LETTER LXXIV.

*The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin
Cham-pi-pi, at Paris.*

Bologna.

I Cannot think how the ministers of Christ reconcile such haughtiness and ostentation with the charity and meekness so much recommended in that religion.

Didst thou but see the parade of the mandarin priest, or legate, whom Rome sends here as its deputy governor, thou wouldst be amazed at the contradiction between his practice and the maxims of his profession.

Our sublime emperor does not appear in public with more pomp and magnificence than this priest of the christian sect.

He is attended by a body of horseguards not less than that of the king of France: his chariot is drawn by six black horses all covered with plates of gold; besides a train of fine coaches for his secretaries, steward, gentlemen, or valets de chambre.

This

This cavalcade moves very slowly, that the people may the longer admire its splendour, and the master enjoy his pride in their adorations; for, wherever he passes, the Bolognese prostrate themselves before his eminence.

This mandarin is absolute; I may say, more despotic than the Great Turk; banishing and putting to death at pleasure.

Would it not be better to have exposed themselves to all the horrors of domestic servitude, than have stooped to such abasement?

Yet this is not all: the state undergoes many other calamities, the legates being but short-lived sovereigns: their commission is only sexennial, and this occasions a continual peculation; for every legate, knowing that in a little time he shall be no longer so, makes hay while the sun shines, according to the European phrase; selling favours of all kinds, and squeezing money out of every thing: for this he has the pope's warrant; and thus Bologna is a prey to the despotism of Rome, and the rapacity of its ministers.

L E T T E R LXXV.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at Pekin.

Paris.

I Was present, the other day, at a solemn *Te Deum* sung in *Notre-Dame* church. The music consisted of great variety of instruments, played by capital hands ; so that all the company were in raptures, and the vaults rung with sounds of joy and triumph.

This is a thanksgiving usually paid to God for an advantage in war not gained, or for a victory only of the ministry's forging. There is not a *Te Deum* which does not cost the nation eight or ten thousand men ; and, for these advantages, God is very frequently thanked ; that is, the more the state suffers, the more they praise the Lord for its prosperity. Indeed, as to the last action for which France has returned thanks to heaven, the French did remain masters of the field of battle, and had the glory of burying their dead ; for the Christian *Te Deums* will suit any events.

This

This thanksgiving is always attended with much weeping; for, amidst these public rejoicings, two or three thousand distressed widows go into mourning, and make the air ring with cries and lamentations. Were this music to be joined in chorus with that of the church, the symphony would be none of the most melodious.

However, there being nothing here, but what has its use, so these *Te Deums* are good for something: they lead the people into a persuasion, that the arms of France carry all before them; which comforts them under the former taxes, and prepares them for additional ones.

LETTER LXXVI.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

MORALITY, the natural tendency of which is to correct the vanity of the human mind, is here made a source of pride and ostentation. In France, books are a branch of luxury: they are not satisfied with having monkeys,

K 2

parrots,

parrots, and Chinese baboons ; they must likewise have moralists and philosophers. A fine gentleman at Paris could not appear in public with any credit, had he not his books and libraries to talk of ; it is now an essential piece of furniture among people of fashion.

Thou wilt readily conceive, that a nobleman, with a library only for fashion, has not leisure enough to spend much time in it. His books are close prisoners, debarred of all communication with any one. To the age in which they are collected they are superfluous ; and the worms hinder their being useful to posterity. Were this the only evil resulting to society from the luxury of books, it would be no great matter ; but it affects the public morals : it is with the productions of the mind as with those of the earth ; a large consumption raises the price : a great number of these ostentatious pieces of furniture keeps up the price of books, so that they, who have a real need of them, are not able to supply themselves. The superfluous libraries in France may be said to hinder the foundation or increase of such as are necessary. Very few here have wherewith to buy books, but those who never look into them.

This

This luxury, together with that of large tracts of land without any produce, should be suppressed: I mean, no person should be allowed to have a useless library, or uncultivated land.

L E T T E R LXXVII.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

AMONG the Asiatics, death terminates life; but here life ends not at death: painting in some measure gives a sur vivance. Many Frenchmen live three or four centuries among their progeny. This capital is full of people whose trade is, to make faces. Most of the apartments exhibit deceased persons: I have been in several great houses where I have been shewn a complete series of defuncts as a most valuable curiosity; and not seldom even from the tenth generation. Some families have life so much at heart, that, had not the worms eaten them up a second time, they would have been living in painting, from father to son, ever since the deluge.

The financiers, and a set of men called
K 3 farmers-

farmers-general, alone shew any great modesty in this article: the picturesque history of their family always begins with them, as if their ancestors had no faces; you see the son's picture, but never that of the father.

Amidst all the encouragement given to the polite arts, painting is become so diminished as to be almost imperceptible. There is now no seeing the beauties of a face without a microscope: in this miniature, as it is called, the beauty toasted all over the universe is often represented within half an inch diameter.

Men however are extremely delighted with this contraction; as thus they put a pretty woman in a snuff-box, and carry a beauty in their pockets, besides the high pleasure of viewing their mistress in a ring: this is a kind of continual enjoyment; for, on any motion of the finger, her enchanting features meet their eye, and thus impart raptures to their enamoured heart.

Formerly, two persons united by love could not leave one another and be together.

At present, a lover may leave his mistress, and go to the other end of the world; yet

yer enjoy her company, and even lie with her.

LETTER LXXVIII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Cotaoyu-se, at Peking.

Paris.

OUR custom in Asia, of confining women to the house, keeps them from forming any other design, than that of pleasing their husbands: a most wise regulation, and which, if advantageous to men, is still more so to the women.

I was, the other day, in a mixed assembly, where a great number of women were to be present, on a rivalry in beauty, and to know which should have the preference above all the others; this being the plan of those rendezvous where women are admitted.

The company were beginning to form when I came in. At first a woman of a very pretty appearance engrossed the looks of all the men: her clear complexion and fine eyes were particularly admired; and the delight this preference gave her was

easily seen; the joy of her soul broke out in her looks: but short was her triumph; a lady coming in soon after, totally eclipsed her: every eye was fixed on the latter, and the former sunk into disregard. Here I perceived her delight turned into rancour; her eyes betrayed her inward torture; her looks lost all that sweetness so admired but an instant before; indignation altered her very features.

This second now felt the same exultation as the former; when a third, coming into the assembly, threw her into the like agitations; and the latter had no sooner begun to triumph in the homage paid to her, than a fourth reduced her to a level with the two former.

This transition, from the most lively joy to the most piercing mortification, made me reflect how happy our Chinese women are in not being exposed to these sudden revolutions, which raise such tempests in the soul.

But these transitory mortifications are nothing in comparison of that constant vexation, which the sex goes through here in their advanced age. Of all creatures, the most despised here is an old woman. Nature shudders, all the senses are disgusted,

gusted, at the very word. No mental accomplishment, or quality, has yet been discovered in women to compensate for age: unhappily for them, youth is a flower of very short duration; whereas old age lasts, as it were, all their life.

The childhood of European women ends at fifteen, and their old age begins at thirty; that is, they die within three lustres after their birth; for that part of life, passed in grief and vexation at being no longer what they were, cannot well be reckoned living.

Our Chinese women know nothing of these torturing sensations: their youth usually terminating with that of the men to whom they are united, it almost always falls out that the juvenile ebullitions of the passions subside to affection, which, by not being so impetuous, is the more solid and equable. The women of Europe may be said to end when those of Asia begin, and to die at a time when these are, as it were, born again.

L E T T E R LXXIX.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, at Paris.

Bologna.

THE Europeans have an irresistible fondness for transplantation: here are colleges of Germans, Spaniards, and other nations, whose natural capacity much exceeds that of the Bolognese.

I know few things more detrimental to a state, than foundations which imply a transplantation; for, if any advantage lies in the climate, foreigners are not benefited by it; and, if there be no such advantage, these foundations may as well be made at home.

Arts and sciences are of the growth of all countries: they are universal plants, which, with cultivation, will thrive every where.

Besides voluntary banishing one's self from one's country, which is always detrimental to the community of which one is a member, there are many other inconveniencies.

By

By frequenting foreigners, a travelled student brings into his country such vices as do more harm to society, than all the sciences, which he went abroad to learn, can do good.

These emigrations might be allowable at a time when the arts had been improved only in two or three nations; but now, in this general spread of knowledge, with little or no difference as to countries, it is not worth while going abroad for what one may have at home, both cheaper and more useful.

The people of these countries, one and all, affect foundations; they are the humour of sovereigns, and the folly of private persons. Some shall spend their whole life in raking and scraping up wealth to found a college, of no more use to the founder than to those for whom it is founded.

This is founding to no purpose, and labouring in vain for posterity.

LETTER LXXX.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at Peking.

Paris.

WHETHER the princes of Europe are of a different nature from common men, I know not ; but it is certain, that they eat and drink more than others.

The victualling of the royal family of France would serve a whole army. A hundred Indian princes would live like princes, only on the remains of Lewis the Fifteenth's table. I have not been able to come at the knowledge, whether this monarch, and his son the dauphin, together with the queen his spouse, have ostriches stomachs ; but never were devoured such quantities of pheasants, quails, snipes, partridges, turkies, ortolans, geese, ducks, and capons, beside the incredible loads of butchers meat. There are every day brought into this kitchen, as appears by the accounts of the purveyor and comptroller, which to be sure
are

are very exact, five or six thousand winged creatures.

The king of France's kickshaws cost the state incredible sums.

Another very large expence is the deserts. A genealogist, hearing that the apples alone, every year, amounted to thirty thousand livres, fell to investigating, whether the present reigning branch of the Bourbons was not originally descended from some old Norman family: another, being informed that a hundred thousand bottles of Burgundy, and the like number of Champaign, were annually drank in his palace, was inclined to believe it derives its pedigree from some Swiss canton. It is impossible that a sovereign can keep such a table, but that of his subjects must be curtailed.

This monarch's blood should be very sweet by the account of his expence in sugar: he consumes thirty thousand hundred weight a year. And, when I think on his coffee, I cannot conceive how he does to sleep, his usual dose being two hundred weight a day.

The other powers, who envy his grandeur, cannot taunt him with spending the night in the dark: the lights for his

his palace at Versailles cost two millions; yet I believe the comptroller of his household receives greater pleasure from them than the master.

Not long since, there was a talk of reforming all these excesses; but I have been told, that such a saving would have affected great numbers of people in the service of the court, who are not paid sufficiently to be restrained from robbing and pilfering; and that it was better to wink at these irregularities, than to put a stop to them: to which it was added, that these monopolies, being of a long standing, and the time of suppressing them elapsed, come within prescription.

LETTER LXXXI.

The Same, to the Mandarin Prime Minister at Peking.

Paris.

IF a minister of state in France is faulty in the duties of his office, and thus endangers the monarchy, he is banished.

If a general of an army takes wrong steps, exposes a large body of troops to needless

needless danger; if he lavishes the blood of the subjects unadvisedly, and thus becomes a traitor to his country; his punishment is ready, he is forbid the court; that is, his penalty consists in seeing his sovereign no more: a sentence little answerable to his demerits. Hence it is, that delinquents are so very common in France: when the punishment is not proportionable to the crime, this only increases the number of criminals.

A placeman tries whether a premeditated stroke of ambition will turn out well to him, and goes about selling the monarchy for his private advantage. If detected, the worst is, his being prevented from executing his design, by the loss of his employment.

A commander ventures on a signal feat against all the rules of the art of war; he will try, whether by the blood of fifty thousand men, he cannot make his way to a marshal's staff. Who can tell? Fortune favours the bold: and should he miscarry, and the madness of his attempt be seen into, he is only dismissed. The breach of his duty offers a brilliant prize, and he loses little or nothing if his crime be discovered; of course he chuses the first.

These

These exiles are not so much as lasting punishments : a great man is no sooner forbid the court than his friends are at work to procure his return ; all have their partizans to palliate their crimes: at length, the prince allows them to come and plead their cause in person, and then there is no danger of their being cast.

Many a general, after being put under arrest, and carried prisoner to a castle, has, the very next year, been seen at the head of an army, as if nothing had happened, and goes on in his former misconduct.

With the eastern princes it is a maxim to put to death those who misbehave in the employments they are intrusted with. A bad minister loses his life, and a general's head answers for the operations of the campaign, and likewise for the army committed to his command.

These punishments, far from being barbarous, as they are called in Europe, are a national right, a strict justice, and the more equitable for being severe. It may easily be proved, that the least malversations of ministers and generals are high treason of the worst sort, and should be punished capitally.

There

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There can be no petty trespasses in posts where the fate of a whole nation is depending; every fault deserves death.

The divan of Constantinople strangles a general for the loss of a battle, though fought according to all the rules of military art. This I own unjust: still it is a document to another general, to be exceeding circumspect, and to make use of all the means which human prudence can suggest, as the lives of so many subjects lie at stake.

Did the courts of Europe follow the Turkish method, both ministers and generals would do their duty better.

LETTER LXXXII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Cotaoyu se, at Peking.

Paris.

OF all the revolutions in Paris, those which happen in the district of voluptuousness are the most sudden and surprising.

Every half-year the vicious world shifts its appearance; the profligate women, who

who were buried in the grave of their guilt, rise again, and are placed on the throne of lewdness.

As I was taking a turn with the chevalier in the great walk of Palais-Royal, pointing at a woman dressed in a gold tissue, covered with diamonds, and a prince leading her, Do you see that woman? said he: it is not above six months ago when she was common to footmen, but soon came to be preferred to the embraces of their masters; and, after being hackneyed by them, the great men of the court were smitten with her; and now she is the doxy of a prince of the blood. Would you think, that it is now the high taste; and that taking a woman from a common bawdy-house, raising her to the top of female parade, erecting an altar to her, and thus venerating ordure and infamy, is refined voluptuousness?

To be intitled to this fashionable *apothecosis*, a creature must have passed through all the degrees of notorious prostitution: French sensuality, at present, cannot relish a woman who is not experienced in the whole course of debauchery.

This and

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This taste, added he, is no better than that of the most filthy beasts, who take a delight in rolling themselves about in the mire.

The annals of the debaucheries of this city would make a complete body of pollution: such a book might be called the History of the Creation of the Dunghill.

LETTER LXXXIII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at Pekin.

Paris.

MY attention to get a knowledge of every institution on which the Europeans value themselves, lately induced me to go and take a view of a new foundation, here called the military school. It is indeed a vast building, and may be called a kind of workhouse; where the conductors of sieges and battles are to serve an apprenticeship, before they formally make their appearance on the theatre of honour.

This plan has so many conveniences, and the nurslings of Mars are so very much at

at their ease in this military seminary, that the institution may be said to have placed the copy a thousand leagues distant from the original.

Every thing in this martial foundation is singular; but not the least of its singularities is its being projected by the most peaceable man in France.

A financier was the schemer; and for this purpose he asked leave of the king to set up a monopoly *. Every martial discipline will be the ruin of several families; and the military school, founded to prevent the devastations of the enemy, will be the first in ravaging the kingdom.

I do not find any one foundation in France, but what is in reality a national detriment.

LETTER LXXXIV.

The Same, to the Same, at Peking.

Paris.
YESTERDAY morning, just as I was going out, two men, in a very odd garb, came into my room. They told me

* The military-school lottery.

me, that they were religious men of such an order, and that, being on their departure for China, they came to receive my commands.

Fathers, said I to them, may I know the motive of your voyage? Sir, answered one of them, with a very mild voice, and in a way which shewed great self-complacence, I am going to convert your countrymen to the holy church. That is, replied I, you undertake a voyage of six thousand leagues, to root out, from the hearts of the sincere, quiet Chinese, the principles of their excellent religion, to disturb their consciences, and extinguish the patriotic virtues in them; for this is the case when a subject, of whatever country, changes his belief; and it is no more than a natural effect. A strange undertaking indeed! said I, and withal far from having any christianity in it; for I have heard that your religion is all good-will and charity; and I am sure, that to go and hurt people who never hurt them, favours little of those excellent qualities.

The same religious man was going to reply, and visibly with less temper, when I myself went on, in the same manner. What would

would you say of two mandarins, who should come from Peking to Paris, purely to preach Confucius's religion? You would, and justly, account it a most ridiculous project; and you could not forbear looking on them as brain-sick fanatics.

If you will go, fathers, even go: I have no commands for you, nor any favours to ask of you; but you would do much better to remain in your convents, according to your vows. With these words I dismissed them: and I perceived my expostulation a little ruffled their Christian meekness.

The society of these seducers is divided into two branches; one, whom I have already mentioned, makes it their business to pervert consciences in Europe; and the other crosses the seas, in order to impose on those in Asia.

LET-

LETTER LXXXV.

*The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin
Cham-pi pi, at Paris.*

• Bologna.

IN the countries under the pope's dominion, the greatest curiosities are relics. Some bonzes gave me an invitation to go and see the head of a saint called St. Dominic. No foreigner is admitted to this sight, without some assurance, that he does not practise any part of surgery; a cardinal having once, under pretence of a mighty desire to view the saint's head, plucked a tooth out of it, and, putting it in a gold box, made off with his booty.

Since that time the bonzes, who have this head in their keeping, endeavour to be on their guard against operators, as otherwise the teeth might soon be gone; and then who knows but some rash or ignorant visitor might carry off a jaw?

After this natural relic I was shewn an artificial one; I mean, the picture of Christ's mother; which is once every year carried in procession. Her usual residence,

instead of Bologna, is on a mountain about a league from the city.

Lest any foul weather might come on whilst she is on the road, a portico has been made from her altar to the city-gates; so that whatever rain the son sends, it would not wet the mother.

The natives of the country say, that this picture was done by Saint Luke, a cotemporary of Christ, which is near eighteen hundred years ago. If so, it is the father of all the pictures in the world; but some evil-minded critics will have it, that the painter was dead fifteen hundred years before the picture was thought of.

However it be, Christ's mother in this picture is an auburn beauty, with a pretty nose, large eyes, a small mouth, white teeth, rosy lips, &c. &c. which, farther, is a proof that female beauty has not lost an inch of ground these eighteen hundred years, the finest women being to this day drawn with those attributes.

LETTER LXXXVI.

*The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin
Kie-tou-na, at Peking.*

Paris.

THE king of France has fixed the number of presses in his dominions; I mean, that no more than six times more bad works have been printed than are read. It is to the humour of regulations that this edict is to be imputed; and the effect of it has been, to enrich some priviledged individuals, and ruin many others. It is not the quantity of presses which does any harm, but the prodigious number of idle citizens who, from the want of other business, turn authors.

What is here called edicts never ascends to the source of the mischief they would correct; they, as it were, only graze the skin of the constitution. The remedy used is almost ever productive of a new distemper, and generally more dangerous than that intended to be cured. Printing should have been allowed, and writing forbid.

As the monarchical government extends its despotic inquisition to the very thoughts, why should it not be extended to those by which society may be hurt? A heap of books, the products of a wild imagination, are daily printed here: now the government should begin by prohibiting these: cannot a state make a better use of its rags, than to feed idleness and promote immorality?

L E T T E R LXXXVII.

The Same, to the Same, at Peking.

Paris.

THE French government is very strict against the publication of writings dangerous to religion, morals, and politics; only works thoroughly orthodox are allowed to be printed: but licentious authors have a sure way for getting their compositions into the world, without hazarding a breach of the laws; they commit their trash to paper, and send it to an adjacent country, called Holland, where they are printed, and afterwards circulated through France. This is without the
verge

verge of the French government, and so the impious writers openly shew themselves every where, as if nothing was the matter.

The European princes, amidst their many usefess conventions, generally forget the most essential. Both sides restore prisoners, and refuse shelter to certain criminals; yet they tolerate licentious, atheistical, and immoral writings, which, by corrupting the people, debase a state; that is, they allow of the very worst sort of high-treason.

L E T T E R LXXXVIII.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris,

IN one of my former I mentioned some women here, who spend their whole life in travelling, who are always in a carriage, and who owe their virtue to perpetual motion. But here is another species, who do not shift places so often, yet are not less absent from themselves. These may be called the sedentary idlers; their indolence employs them always

too much for love to fasten on their hearts: they have just time enough to spend their lives in doing nothing. Here is the journal of such a lady.

She rises at nine: her dresser, who knows the watch-word, comes into her chamber, and lays hold of her head: till eleven she continues under his comb. She then proceeds to her toilette, where she spends a full hour in completing her dress, and putting the finishing hand to her charms. Then comes the music-master, who takes up another hour; and he is succeeded by Mr. Rigadoon, the dancing-master, who, taking out his kit, makes madam walk a minuet, and dance two *pass-pieds*: this exercise runs away with another hour; and now it is dinner-time, which is at least a business of two hours. From the table she goes to her coach a visiting, and makes one at the card-table till six, when the play calls her away: this brings on nine o'clock; then for the table again, where she eats, sings, laughs, and frolics, till midnight, her usual bedtime.

On a calculation of this lady's life, divided into twenty-four hours a day, I find that should she live twelve lustres, she

she will have spent exactly five years with her dresser, four years at her looking-glass, three years with her music-master, the like number with her dancing-master, six years at cards, twenty years at table, and thirty in bed.

LETTER LXXXIX.

The Same, to the Same, at Peking.

A Prince of the royal blood, being lately out a shooting, killed a subject of the king of France, and, it is said, only by way of trying his piece, and proving the barrel. The poor man was put into the ground, and, the next day, the prince made a laughing-matter of this adventure with the court-lords. It reached his majesty's ear, but without his taking any notice of it, there being no laws here to hinder the great from killing their inferiors; or, if there is, the despotism of rank quashes all observance of them; which is tantamount to there being none.

Wretched government, where the people have no protector against violence and tyranny, and where the prince himself cannot secure his subjects lives!

I frequently rejoice at being born in a society, where the constitution animadverts on such barbarities, and all the outrages of cruel pride. Our institution of censors fences us from the like violences. The life of the meanest subject in China is as safe as that of the highest; and, should a prince of the royal blood kill any individual, though of the lowest class, the censors would immediately make a report of it to the court, in order to his being proceeded against according to the severity of the laws; and, on a disregard of such report, the consequence would be, either the punishment of the prince, or the dethronement of the emperor.

L E T-

LETTER XC.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Superintendent of Religion at Peking.

Paris.

WERE I put to my choice of several religions, I should prefer that which is most suitable to the duties of a member of society; it being reasonable to believe that God, as the creator of society, has adapted his doctrine to the perpetuation of this union, and not to its decay or destruction.

Whatever religion we profess, we are to restore to Nature what it lent us: it made us men, and we should contribute to the increase of the species: so that a religion, which cramps the sacredness of marriages, is suspicious.

The catholic religion may be said to have done every thing in its power for extinguishing that lawful propagation of mankind, to which itself owes its existence: it teaches, that he who marries does well, but that he who does not marry does better. There are at present

in Europe three millions of thorough good catholics, who, for that very reason, are bad citizens.

A sect, whose ritual tends to the impair of the human species, is working its own destruction. It may be geometrically demonstrated, that had the Roman catholic religion, such as it now is, been established six thousand years before its promulgation, there would by this time have been no people remaining in Europe, and consequently no religion.

Nor is this the only exception against this communion; the prodigious multitude of ceremonies makes its followers superstitious, and herein it hurts society; for, of all vices, superstition is that by which the mind is most enervated and debased.

Its imagery causes an intellectual debility, which, communicating itself to the soul, slackens the alertness and vigour necessary for the discharge of the more difficult obligations of civil life.

The great number of saints, whose festivals are continually recurring, cut the thread of public industry, and infect the mind with an indolence productive of a thousand evils.

Another

Another inconvenience of this sect, perhaps, may be that prodigious train of mental prayers directed to heaven, but never rising above the earth.

I could find in my heart to say, that the Roman catholics pray to God too much, but do not love him enough; for, did they love him, they would have a greater regard to his work; I mean, that civil society in which he caused them to be born.

LETTER XCI.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ci, to the Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, at Paris.

Bologna.

DIVINE worship here is very gay; nothing can be more exhilarating than the public acts of devotion, as performed in churches. Most of the prayers addressed to the Supreme Being are accompanied with music. The hymns are pricked down, and played in cadence. Almost all the benedictions, which God gives to his people, are pronounced with symphony and thorough-bass. The mercy of heaven is implored in quavers, and

every musical exertion of the voice. They speak to God in the same manner as to their mistress.

I lately went to what here is called a high mass : at my coming into the church I really thought I was at the opera ; at least, there is no difference as to the composition. Intros, symphonies, minuets, rigadoons, solos, duos, choruses, drums, trumpets, kettle-drums, French-horns, hautboys, violins, fifes, flagelets, &c. &c. in a word, every part of theatrical music had its part in this act of devotion.

It was a master-piece of impiety. Had the composer intended a mass for the Goddess of Voluptuousness, he could not have made use of softer sounds, or more lascivious modulations. No Christian can be present at this joyous sacrifice, but he must, with the utmost gaiety of heart, resolve to love God. And that this shew might the more resemble a theatrical exhibition, a stage was built at the farther end of the church, for the musicians to act the mass.

The tunes of this divine solemnity could not fail of making impressions on the audience, being taken from the most vulgar

gar and obscene ballads, only altering the words.

Especially there is a hymn addressed to the Deity, the second verse of which begins with these Latin words, *Tantum ergo*, which is always highly entertaining.

The first performance is a melting and voluptuous *adagio*, inclining the mind to softness ; then comes an *allegro*, which disperses that languor, and imparts a lively hilarity ; it concludes with the brisk and precipitate measures of the rigadoon, which, in Europe, excites the hearers to dance more than any other air.

All the saints of paradise have their particular serenades : on the days consecrated to the celebration of their festival, they are honoured with a great deal of fiddling in the pagods called by their name, to the extreme diversion, and, no doubt, edification, of good Christians.

LETTER XCII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at Peking.

Paris.

THE following piece appeared a few days ago in the great walk of the garden of Palais-Royal, where the malcontents regularly get together, to carp at the administration. It is looked upon as a censure on the taxes, which are daily increased, yet without any diminution of the public's misfortunes, and is inscribed to the comptroller-general, as president of the council of ways and means for raising money.

“ Memorial for augmenting the Revenues of the Crown of France, and
 “ supplying the Government's present
 “ Wants, offered to his Excellency the
 “ Comptroller-General.

“ May it please your Excellency,
 “ The project, which I do myself the
 “ honour to lay before you, is one of
 “ the

“ the most solid which has yet appeared,
 “ though built in the air.

“ Many are the imposts which have
 “ been laid on luxury, the conveniences of
 “ life, and on every thing in general, which
 “ has a relation to pleasure: whence is it
 “ then that none has been laid on that
 “ which is the greatest pleasure of all? I
 “ mean, talking.

“ The more richly a person dresses,
 “ the greater his number of servants, or
 “ the more sumptuous table he keeps, the
 “ more he pays to the state; whereas he
 “ may talk from morning till night, with-
 “ out paying a single penny. The more
 “ he shines abroad, the more is he taxed;
 “ yet his shining in a company by his
 “ wit, subjects him to no tax.

“ To bring the taxes to a kind of
 “ equality, and supply the present ne-
 “ cessities of the state, there is but one
 “ way, *viz.* taxing words: but women
 “ excepted; for, without such an excep-
 “ tion, all the families in the kingdom
 “ would be ruined in twenty-four hours.

“ Yet must the manner of levying
 “ this duty be such, that the nation may
 “ not intirely lose the use of speech;
 “ for there is not in nature a more stu-
 “ pid

“ pid animal than a mute Frenchman :
“ he has scarce any dumb scenes. An
“ Italian can express himself for ten
“ years together without talking : he
“ has, for this end, distortions, gesti-
“ culations, and grimaces ; whereas the
“ Frenchman cannot say a word without
“ his tongue. My plan is this. I have cal-
“ culated, that a man may make a decent
“ figure in company with three thousand
“ six hundred words a day : so that the
“ surplus should be taxed by an arret,
“ at the rate of a livre for every word
“ over and above the said number, and
“ three livres for two ; as it is not the
“ proportion of words which should be the
“ rule here, but that of the itch of speak-
“ ing.

“ The chief offices for raising this du-
“ ty should be at the public coffee-
“ houses, as the produce there would
“ be greatest : assembly-rooms would
“ also be proper places : idlers by profes-
“ sion, who have nothing to do but to
“ talk, would pay considerably : large
“ sums would also come in from lovers ;
“ and the preachers alone would fill the
“ king’s coffers : the *recreations* of the
“ monks would also prove a good fund :
“ counsellors,

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“ counsellors, attornies, and other limbs
“ of the law, who always say six words
“ instead of one, would, in this respect,
“ be good members of society: then
“ likewise the impertinent garrulity of
“ the pleaders, who are continually talk-
“ ing of their processes, would turn to
“ the public emolument.

“ The great genuises and fine speak-
“ ers would also incur a multitude of
“ fines.

“ This tax should be levied by the
“ Carthusian fathers, who by their disci-
“ pline being devoted to silence, conse-
“ quently know the true value of useless
“ words. Thus, Sir, would the king of
“ France become the richest potentate in
“ the universe; for do not imagine, that
“ such an ordinance would tongue-tie a
“ French-man; they love talking too well
“ for that; it would only be drawing their
“ purse-strings.

“ According to my computations, (ex-
“ clusive of women, children, old men,
“ and ideots, who cannot be debarred
“ from speaking) this tax may be farmed
“ out at a million of livres *per diem*, in-
“ cluding the four sous *per livre* for le-
“ vying it.”

LET-

LETTER XCIII.

The Same, to the Mandarin Cotaoyu-se, at Peking.

Paris.

THE king of France must be a wonderful magician: only his fixing his eyes on an object produces an apparent total change in it.

Here the prince's favour turns vices to virtues, gives a lustre to the complexion, heightens beauty, and imparts genius, wit, and knowledge, amidst all the defects of nature and education.

A woman, who before could not manage her household, suddenly becomes capable of governing the kingdom.

The prepossession caused by royal favour is superior to every other: it is the universal worship in France; the French make it their very religion, though some heretics there are even in this article.

I was lately in a company, where the qualities of a certain lady, now in favour, were extolled to the skies: a gentleman, who had patiently heard this declamation

to

to the very end, said to the encomiasts, Come, come, gentlemen, stay till the spell of prepossession be broke, and then I shall be glad to hear you pronounce definitively on those sublime endowments and virtues which you now so fluently exalt.

Should this way of suspending one's judgment on persons in high station, till the veil of favour were rent, grow into use, deserts highly celebrated would often be seen to sink into obscurity.

L E T T E R XCIV.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Superintendent of Religion at Peking.

Paris.

I Lately went to see a convent of black bonzes, which has a public library. Father, said I to the librarian, be so kind as to order such a book to be brought to me, naming a piece lately come out. Sir, said he to me in a most mild manner, this is the region of the antients; we have scarce any correspondence with the moderns. Why, said I, do not you think them worthy to figure with the *literati* of the

the first ages? To be sure, answered he; and, could we come at them, we would give them the first rank: but, Sir, those books are very dear; great numbers of them are published, so that the expence mounts high, and our library is not the best endowed; for, as to our other revenues, you must needs think, we shall not go and lay them out in paper: we have better foundations in hand than that of books. Not meeting with what I wanted in this library, I came away.

This disappointment turned my thoughts to take a view of the convent. Father, said I to a second bonze, whom I alighted on in a large darkish dormitory, will you favour me so far as to shew me your house? Sir, answered he coldly, that is not my business; we keep porters at our gate to dangle after strangers: however, to oblige you, I will comply with your request; follow me. I perceived that the building was very large, but without any thing pleasing or remarkable, being quite irregular, and in the Gothic taste.

As we were crossing a court, I observed a large tube raised on a wooden stand, with one of the ends pointing towards the sky, and its bore exceeding that of the largest

largest fort of cannon. Pray, said I, what may be the use of this tube? It is a telescope, said he, contrived by one of our brethren, for bringing the moon almost in contact with the earth. That will be very convenient, father; an approximation to that planet has been long sought after: the astronomers must hold themselves extremely obliged to you for such an expence. It is not we that are at the expence, replied the bonze; our revenues have no concern with the stars: the expence is the king's, and he has already advanced a considerable sum, without the telescope's being ever the more forward. We are indeed under some apprehension, that our learned brother will pay the debt of nature before he has put the finishing hand to his work; and thus, after all the charge, the moon will not be an inch nearer us than it was before.

He then led me into the garden. Father, said I to my guide, may I take the liberty to ask what may be your employment in the convent? Sir, said he, I am one of the order's four chief ministers of state; my department is its waters and forests. I have access, when I please, to the greatest courtiers at Versailles, and here at Paris

ris I converse with the chief men of the army and law. A fine employment truly ! said I ; I did not think there had been any such thing in religious houses.

There is only one difficulty with me, and that is your age ; for, though you are past the spring of life, you are not in its decline ; and I have heard, that it is only through length of years that one attains to the chief monastical posts. But envy, I suppose, is not known in your society ? Envy not known ! my God ! replied he ; envy not known ! ay, take my word for it, there's more envy among us than in any court of Europe.

A monk in general, added he, is a phlegmatic, morose animal, and without any other business than to push himself in his community. The men of the world are often too busy to be actuated by ambition ; whereas the monks, being always idle, are universally possessed with it.

Among us there are two roads to follow, the world and God : the former requires wit, discernment, and activity, with a turn for business ; for the second, there needs no more than an habit of retirement, prayer, and contemplation, and a sort of religious enthusiasm,

enthusiasm, which renders a man unfit for any other thing than devotion.

The latter may lead to heaven; but it leads to nothing among us: I chose the former, which is the road to distinction. I unravelled and reduced into order the affairs of our provincial houses; I gained law-suits, by which they were enriched; I distributed incomes to those which had none, and added to those which were too scanty: in a word, I had qualified myself for my post long before it was conferred on me: that's the history of my promotion.

There are certainly instantaneous sympathies; I immediately took a liking to this bonze, and asked leave to call upon him sometimes, which he readily granted, and we separated.

LETTER XCV.

*The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin
Kie-tou-na, at Peking.*

Paris.

THE chevalier, who has but little religion himself, fancies that all the people, on the other side of the line, have none at all; so, to convince him that there are other religious nations on the earth, besides the Christians, I lately gave him an abridgment of our doctrine.

We Chinese, said I to him, believe that there is a God, the universal principle of all things, by whom the heaven and earth, men, plants, and animals, were created.

We believe, that murder is a horrid crime, and that to with-hold the property of another, or what is due to him, is a very bad action.

We believe, that we should not slander, nor speak ill of our neighbour.

We believe God to be virtue and wisdom in the abstract, that all his qualities are perfections, and all his perfections attributes of his divinity.

We

We are persuaded, that to please him men must be just and equitable, because he loves the good, and hates the wicked.

We are convinced, that nothing in the universe is hidden to him; that he knows the secrets of hearts, and that his fore-knowledge penetrates through the abyss of futurity.

We believe, that he is just and equitable, that he will reward men's virtues, and punish their vices.

We believe, that, to be in his favour, we must observe the laws of nature, and the dictates of those divine persons whom he has sent for our instruction.

We are persuaded, that the calamities, with which he visits us, are admonitions to amend our ways; and that these evils are ever attended with goodness and mercy.

We believe, that he chastises us as a father, and not as a vindictive sovereign.

We believe, that this Supreme Essence directs our actions, yet without any constraint put on our free-will; that it is in our power to do good, and that we are not compelled to do evil; that we ought not to attribute our good works to ourselves,
but

but to him who is the spring and fountain of all goodness.

We believe, that there is a Providence which conducts the world, and that he, who is the principle of all things, superintends and directs all things, &c. &c.

Upon my word, said the chevalier, when I had ended, those are very good things which your people believe: by what I see, a step or two more would make Christians of you.

I must, however, tell you, that you Chinese are wanting to your own interest in religious matters: why not add to all those articles, the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ? and then, believe me, you would be better Christians than we ourselves.

LETTER XCVI.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, at Paris.

Loretto.

THERE is a virgin here, to whom the Christians are very much obliged, as, every day, taking from them part of
of

of their luxury, so that in time there will scarce be a jewel to be seen in Europe; they will all be in the hands of this mother of God.

Besides her clothes being all covered with them, she has a private shop with an amazing store, called the treasure of Loretto: it is shewn to strangers by a mandarin, who also recounts to them the names of the benefactors to this cabinet of curiosities.

There is not a house in Europe, ever so prophane, more set off with trinkets, gewgaws, and superfluities, than the *Santa Casa*.

The vanity of heaven will not allow of these astonishing riches to be turned into money, for the relief of the distressed on earth.

There might be a famine in the country, and all the inhabitants miserably perish, before the Madona of Loretto would part with the least of her toys.

This treasure, instead of promoting plenty, is one of the chief causes of public wretchedness.

The country of Loretto is one of the poorest on earth; the people are starving.

I have heard that several attempts have been made for pillaging the holy house ; and that must be the upshot ; for when the people shall have nothing left, and the mother of God have all, the only remedy will be to rob her.

The *Santa Casa* is properly Christ's house, where his mother was delivered of him. At his nativity, it was only a hut, but is now a splendid palace.

It stood originally seven or eight hundred leagues from hence ; but not liking its situation, it set out a travelling, and for more conveniently taking a view of the country, it made several stops, being always carried by angels, who, at length, set it down on the spot from whence I now write to you.

It is wrong in rational people to tack such tales to religion ; which should be clear of every appearance of absurdity, lest strangers and evil-minded persons make it a handle for ridiculing the whole.

L E T-

LETTER XCVII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at Peking.

Paris.

WHATEVER genius, or talent, a Frenchman be endowed with, he cannot employ them to the advantage of the state without being of the king's communion. For a citizen to be qualified to serve the monarchy and the sovereign, he must profess to believe that God is contained in a wafer of an inch diameter. Without such a declaration, were he in military abilities equal to Cæsar himself, he cannot hold any post in the army; nor can the most able lawyer ever be a judge, &c.

It is a most gross oversight, for a government thus to deprive itself of its own strength. Thou canst readily conceive what great qualities must lie buried, and capacity be distressed, as likewise what a deficiency of virtues there must be in a kingdom which brands with contempt those of its subjects, who, considering

their fewer superstitions, should be superior to the others: I say fewer superstitions, because the fewer ceremonies and observances with which religion is clogged, the fewer prejudices it leaves in the mind; and this is the very case of that worship which the laws proscribe. I do not say that the religion of those, here called protestants, is better than that of the Roman catholics, but only that it is freer from absurdities.

The first ideas which education impresses on men are those relative to religion; and, if these be wrong, they tinge the mind with a falsity, which afterwards spreads thro' the whole tenor of their conduct. Were I king of France, I would put the protestants at the head of political and civil affairs, not because they do not believe in the mass, but because, being exempt from the multitude of prejudices, they are better qualified to make use of their understanding.

L E T.

L E T T E R XCVIII.

*The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin
Cham-pi-pi, at Pekin.*

Rome.

I Write to thee from a city, which formerly disturbed the whole globe, and still has a great influence in the world.

There are countries which seem to exist only to grieve human nature.

This capital was formerly the centre of strength ; at present it is the fixed point of debility.

The Cæsars raised it, and the popes have debased it ; the virtues of the former struck all nations with admiration, and the vices of the latter have sunk it into universal contempt.

I have given thee a representation of the see of Rome in my account of its politics, so that I shall not enlarge any more on this subject, as all I should say would be only a repetition of what thou already knowest ; for Rome, ever since the establishment of the papacy, has always been

the same. The capital often varied, but the vatican never was known to change: the same causes, to which it owed its elevation, continue to support it.

I might here give you a delineation of the manners of modern Rome, as the only thing in this city remaining to acquaint thee with: but wickedness is here at such a height, that, I fear, a detail of it would affect thee too strongly.

Religion here always gives way to politics: this is the spring, cause, and effect, of all human actions. Ambition is the image which all the members of the sacred college fervently worship; no body bestows a thought on being sincerely virtuous; all the care is to appear so.

Treachery, perfidiousness, and villainy, wear religion's livery, and are practised under the name of Christian virtues.

The people here are premeditatedly wicked, and wholly from the interest of being so.

Voluptuousness, debauchery, and sensuality, are dressed in violet*; and guilt clothes itself in purple.—But so much for this picture, which disgraces human nature.

* The prelates.

LETTER XCIX.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Superintendent of Religion at Peking.

Paris.

THE Christians, if we may judge by appearances, think that God delegates the administration of the world to his saints, and that at present the universe is governed by deputies.

A Christian, who knows any thing of his religion, never applies to God in his prayers, but has always recourse to his domestics. When a public favour is wanted from heaven, the way they go about it is thus :

The mandarin priests appoint public prayers ; if prayers fail, they order fasts ; and, if these prove ineffectual, what is called the Good God is carried about : and when all the premisses won't do, a procession is made with images and shrines ; and this, they say, never fails.

There is here a female saint, called Genevieve, who, I conclude, is directress of the waters and woods at Paris. Her busi-

ness is, to mind that the city and country be duly watered. Accordingly she is carried in procession, that, with her own eyes, she may see the drought, and how wrong it is in God to be so long without making it rain; for, in the Christian religion, the saints are to repair the lesser oversights of heaven. This favour the Parisians never ask till the last extremity, and when there has not been any rain for a long time, which is always a certain reason that it will rain soon. But to secure the miracle, and thus not expose their Genevieve's reputation, they stay till the weather seems quite inclined to rain; and so well do they time their measures, that it often pours down before the idol has gone thro' half of its processions: at this the people run out of their houses, prostrate themselves before the saint's shrine, and, with up-lifted hands, cry out, A miracle! a miracle! What sayest thou of a people so industrious in fomenting superstition?

LETTER C.

*The Same, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at
Pekin.*

Paris.

BESIDES the juridical tribunals, common to every city in France, there is a particular tribunal for the government of Paris, called the Police: it takes cognizance of the order and safety of the capital. One inconveniency of this tribunal is, that there is not an honest man among all its officers; no-body makes interest to get into the police, till he has so disgraced himself in the world as not to be admitted into any other society. Its corruption must be great indeed, since the French, who make so light of certain other prejudices, have not yet got over this. A citizen, with the least remains of probity, declines being of the police.

It is universally said, that every hand in that court is horribly foul with money taken for palliating the most enormous crimes. This iniquitous court has one

eye shut, and the other open; with one ear it hears all complaints, and with the other it hears none.

Most of the tennis courts, and places of bad resort, are privileged by this court. The common civil magistrate is not to interfere in restraining debauchery. It is said, that, if there were no court of police in Paris, its polity would be better. Since this establishment licentiousness walks bare-faced. Formerly, the vice of fornication sculked amidst filth and obscurity: at present, it shews itself openly; it is warranted by his excellency the lieutenant-general. The laws of the state forbid games of chance, but the police permits them; accordingly there is a great deal of public gaming.

As to the remainder of its administration, all is natural: the inquisitors into thefts and robberies collude with the thieves and robbers; they, of the department of gaming, agree with the sharpers; and the very officers, for superintending the corruption of women, corrupt them.

But I draw a veil over this sink of ordure, my design not being to give thee a picture of the abomination of desolation at Paris. One particular more shall conclude:

clude: all the punishments in this abominable court fall only on poor wretches, who, having not wherewith to pay for their crimes, are good for nothing but to be made examples.

LETTER CI.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, at Paris.

NAPLES is a large city, full of inhabitants; but, especially, its buildings are of a striking magnificence, and the pagods so superb, that it is a question who is best lodged, men or their Creator.

Luxury and wretchedness are every where seen hand in hand; every house is a medley of riches and poverty; pride and ostentation take the lead of the immediate necessities of life. At Naples they have so many superfluities, that it is impossible but they must be straitened by real wants.

This city, since the time of the Romans, has successively belonged to several sovereigns.

sovereign families, of whom some ruined it, and others have rebuilt it.

It is not long since the spirit of politics had the curiosity to inquire to whom it belonged of real right. Some military geographers, bringing with them a good army into Italy, found that it appertained to the house of Spain, and, accordingly, a son of that crown came and took possession of it: this discovery was made by battering-cannon. Spain kept possession of it, till a German geographer, coming with stronger proofs, demonstrated, that the right proprietor of it was the house of Austria.

The Neapolitans are said to be the wickedest people on the whole earth; and I believe it: their wickedness must be the greater, as coming from afar: the several governments, to which it has been subject, have infected it with all the vices of the several climates in Europe.

LE T-

LETTER CH.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at Peking.

Paris.

IN France, freedom in love is an established maxim; the engagements of men with women are like treaties between sovereigns, binding no longer than suits with interest: when otherwise, there's an end of the compact.

In Asia, a perjured person, at least, shews some shame for his baseness; but here, perfidiousness is so far from being disgraceful, that they roundly acknowledge it. I here send thee a letter from one of those fickle lovers, who, after a thousand solemn protestations of an eternal love, justifies himself, as follows:

“MADAM,

“Don't blame me for loving you no
 “longer, as herein I only follow that very
 “propensity which gave birth to my
 “affection. If I promised to love you for
 “ever, there was a tacit proviso, that
 “you

“ you should be always amiable ; for how
“ could I protest to love eternally what
“ might cease to be an object of desire ?
“ Love is founded on reciprocations of
“ pleasure ; and when one party no longer
“ feels that pleasure, there must be a
“ cause in the other, which has put an
“ end to it. In me it cannot be, as this
“ would be acting against my own interest ; that is, against my pleasure.

“ My inconstancy is not a vice inherent in me, but proceeding from some
“ defect in yourself. When I loved you,
“ you had charms and qualities, which
“ made me think you amiable. Those
“ allurements must no longer exist in you,
“ as I now love you no longer ; for
“ had you continued to be what you
“ really was in my eyes, I should still
“ love you.

“ Perhaps you may have done too much
“ for me : some lovers are to be led about
“ through the maze of hope ; on their
“ reaching the summit of their happiness
“ they are no longer happy.

“ Call me not ungrateful : I should
“ not be wanting in gratitude, had you
“ not, designing to bind me to greater
“ gratitude,

“gratitude, forced me to be ungrateful.”

Thou seest that the perjured lover is in the right, and that she who stood upon constancy has wronged herself. In Europe indeed the longest lover comes off with the worst. To avoid reproaches of deceit and inconstancy, the French should love a-pace, and break off with the like dispatch.

LETTER CIII.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

THE people in France will never get rid of their frenzy for nobility; it seems an incurable calenture in them. The commonalty are continually ridiculing it, and telling sarcastical stories of it; yet cannot the commoner behave himself like a man in the presence of a noble: they despise the nobility in general, and venerate it in an individual.

Every one knows very well that it is only personal qualities which can raise the soul above the vulgar; that the virtues

tues of the dead cannot dignify the living; that a man is not estimable for being issued from a long series of ancestors; and that worm-eaten patents constitute but a very slender merit; with a hundred similar observations: and yet the respect paid here to nobility is carried to idolatry.

A nobleman, who can prove his four quarterings, is sure of bringing to his lure all the rich farmers of the revenue who have marriageable daughters. Amidst all the droll satyrs and pasquinades on their manners and behaviour, the laughter will be always on their side. Their parchments will ever attract the whole body of financiers. Let us suppose a plebeian family for several generations labouring in the accumulation of wealth: the last male descendant, having only one daughter, of course an immense rich heiress, exults in disposing of her to a nobleman, who, in six months time, destroys the labour of years. All of the father's class pity the daughter's fate, and continually upbraid the parents for their foolish ambition; yet, amidst all this pity, and whilst the talk of her misfortune is still fresh in the city, another commoner, still richer, marries his only daughter to a nobleman,
with

with an immense portion, which is dissipated as quickly as the former.

After all, it ought to be so in a kingdom where every individual is allowed to prey on the public, and where labour and industry acquire the greatest part of the national wealth : without these matches money would be on one side, and nobility on the other ; the men of birth would be so poor, that they could not so much as afford to go and be knocked on the head in the field of battle.

Were it not for these alliances, France would have only two classes, the rich and the poor. It is necessary that the plebeians should be always labouring for the idle nobility, and that this same nobility should distribute the fruits of this labour among the people ; otherwise the general circulation would stagnate. They are two bodies quite incompatible in their opinions, ways, and morals, but whom interest often unites.

LETTER CIV.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Superintendent of Religion at Pekin.

Paris.

THE Christian religion is extremely mysterious; every part of it is wrapped up in impenetrable secrecy. It is not so much of its incomprehensible mysteries that I speak, as of its most common usages. The people in their addresses to God make use of a language which they don't understand. It is only on the word of their mandarins that they know they are praying; and if they do know that they are praying, they generally know nothing of what they are praying for. Christians invoke the Supreme Being in a pagan tongue, that is, in the idiom of an idolatrous sect; which, in their own opinion, is fitter for offending the Deity, than to be used in supplications.

I have asked the reason of this unintelligible act of religion, and some plausible reasons have been given for it. I am told that

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that the Europeans, and the French especially, are so indiscreet, that they would ask of God things quite out of all reason, should they know what they ask of him.

Were a mother allowed to call on God in the common tongue, she would often pray for the recovery of a son, on whom she dotes, though unworthy to live: a woman, in the impatience at the absence of her lover, would trouble the Almighty about hastening his return, &c. &c.

Some sects there are, however, among Christians, who lay open their wants to God clearly and with understanding: these are the reformed, as they are called, who, at the time they shook off the pope's yoke, abolished several errors and abuses which his sect still adheres to.

L E T T E R CV.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Cotaoyu-se, at Peking.

Paris.

IF I omit acquainting thee with the fantasticalness of the French women's dresses, it is, that to do it fully, and with
any

any propriety, I must have gone through a course of experimental physics; I must have studied the whole system of colours, and traced nature in all its several gradations.

Every woman here is a perfect rainbow, varied from head to foot. Her dress is an assemblage of rose colour, violet, purple, and amaranth. The head of a Parisian is usually white, her neck black, her body red, and her feet grey; though the lilac is at present the reigning colour. The dress of a French woman of fashion is a kind of garden with trees and flowers of every season. This variety is not confined to plants and fruits; their gowns frequently display houses and stately seats: some shall have cities on their backs, as if they were a map: others, still more singular, wear the whole terraqueous globe; Africa on the right side, America on the left, and the Torrid Zone before, under the waist: others, again, prefer an animal gown; that is, diversified with creatures of all kinds, fishes, birds, dogs, cats, rats, crocodiles, lions, wolves, foxes, &c. A curious observer meets with few women in France, without a monkey in some part of her under-petticoat.

L E T.

LETTER CVI.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, at Paris.

Naples.

NAPLES has no power of its own ; its principal strength lies in the distance of the large political bodies from it. To come at it by land, the body of the Roman church must be trampled on ; a prophanation which politics despise too much ever to put in execution : besides, this small state would be no addition of grandeur, no increase of strength to the conqueror. It is too remote from the centre of political action : thus safe by its situation, it gives itself no concern about preventing an invasion.

Naples has a military force, but no soldiers ; it being now some centuries since Italy has turned its thoughts from any thing belonging to war.

All the other methods tending to the aggrandisement of states are unknown here. They are likewise no less behind-hand

hand in arts and industry, than in political schemes.

Some alert and sensible ministers have been very earnest for repairing the shattered parts of this government: great commercial schemes have been brought on the carpet; even the Grand Seignior has been talked to; but nothing came to any head.

In most of the southern governments in Europe, natural obstructions impede the advancement of arts. There is no imparting action to a corpse, or bringing the dead to work; and almost all Italy is now buried under the rubbish of its luxury and voluptuousness.

At Naples the heat enervates the body; so that indolence is a national vice, and monkery completes the lethargy. The bonzes outnumber all the other citizens; but this heavenly host is a great weakening to earthly strength.

The trades-people, farmers, and even artificers, shut themselves up in convents, where they become quite useless to the commonwealth. And this is a sloth which the government is not to prevent; they must wink at it, such being the king's order.

L E T-

LETTER CVII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Cotao-yu-se, at Peking.

Paris.

THE French drink little or no wine; yet so far from any principle of temperance, that it is to promote intemperance: they imagine that liquor gives the skin a brown tinge, and hinders the face from appearing agreeable; whereas water whitens the skin, and gives it that pale and livid colour, without which a man must not hope to be liked by the fair-sex. This reformation owes its introduction to the women; and herein they agree with the eastern legislator.

Another inconveniency of wine is its giving a consistency and plumpness to the body, which is quite contrary to all the rules of French gallantry; for genuine love here should be almost impalpable.

There is no setting up for handsomeness, without being slim, limber, and weak, even to the not having six ounces of flesh on one's bones.

A strong

A strong fleshy man is accounted a coarse, ill-bred creature: to be in good case is only fit for porters and coachmen; the French pretty fellow really is little better than a moving skeleton.

And, besides being meagre and emaciated, he must likewise be sick. The present mode of gentility by no means allows of a firm state of health: he, who should take on him to be perfectly well, would be but indifferently thought of. It is only the peasants, and low-lived people, who are so preposterously brought up as to have a good constitution: by the genuine rules of French politeness, that of the courtiers and fops must be spoiled: especially, in high-life, the asthma is a requisite quality: a young man without coughing a little durst not shew himself in good company.

All the high-flown gallants, at present, observe the white diet: by the same rules of national politeness, their stomach must also be exceeding weak; they must frequently complain of indigestions, and openly protest they are irrecoverably gone.

A pretty fellow, who would recommend himself to a lady, lives on pastils, creams, green-peas, and tid bits: eating roast-
beef

beef for supper would disgrace a man forever, unless, in proof of the weakness of his stomach, he died the next day of indigestion.

The fashionable gallant, or, as he is called, *the man of the day*, has always half a dozen illnesses to complain of on emergencies, when he is for setting forth the weakness of his constitution. To succeed with the fair-sex, he must have frequently in his mouth the words, *breast, cold, megrim, vapours*, and especially *convulsions*, the latter being very common among the Paris belles.

LETTER CVIII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Superintendent of Religion at Peking.

Paris.

SCARCE any body here keeps himself within the limits of his station: not only men, but the very saints meddle with what does not concern them.

In the pagods are virgins, by means of whom women bring forth children: the barren implore their influence, that their

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husbands

husbands may not lie with them in vain : they pray them to shed so copious a benediction on their nuptial bed, that generation may be the consequence.

When the miracle has operated, and a woman, before barren, is delivered of a child, she sends a large wax doll to the virgin who conferred fecundity on her. In some pagods, you see a virgin with twenty children about her. It is, however, said, that this miracle is never brought about between the virgin and the barren woman, but that there is always a third person, who performs the miracle. If the fraud be detected, then the virgin image is used pretty nearly as we do our idols.

Some time ago an affair happened here, which caused a good deal of laughter; and even the warmest sticklers for the miraculous power of images could not keep their countenance.

In a little town, about two leagues from Paris, which has one of these fecundating virgins, lives a young married lady, who had in vain implored her for the space of three years, when a captain of dragoons passed that way, going to the army. The son of Mars was young, gay, and vigorous :

vigorous: he spoke, he persuaded, and he engendered. After his departure, the young lady, perceiving that she was no longer barren, hastened to the pagod to pray the virgin image to remove her sterility. Her prayers were heard, and at the end of eight months she was brought to bed of a fine boy. The whole town was all alive about the miracle, admiring the prodigious virtue of the image. The public acclamations were not yet subsided, when the captain, in his return from the army, passed again through this place. He was out of patience to hear that an image enjoyed the fruit of his labours, and robbed him of the glory of this miracle. He immediately repaired to the pagod, and, going up to the virgin's niche, spoke to her in this manner.

“It is very odd, lady virgin, that you
 “should assume to yourself an honour
 “due only to me. Pray, what did you
 “contribute to the formation of this
 “child? Was not the whole cost mine?
 “Is there a single hair on his head which
 “belongs to you? Had the young lady,
 “whom I have relieved from her barren-
 “ness, gone on invoking you for twenty
 “years, what would she have been the
 “better?

“ better ? There must be something more
 “ than prayers and petitions to make wo-
 “ men bring forth children. Come, Miss
 “ Idol, keep to your own business ; and
 “ know further, that, were it not for your
 “ sex, I would smash you all to shivers ;
 “ but honour will not allow a French
 “ officer to lay his hands on a woman.”

At these words he left the pagod, and
 went to the young lady, to try whether
 she was disposed for a second miracle.

LETTER CIX.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Paris.

I Am at a loss, said a Frenchman lately
 to me, who knows all the defects of
 the administration, why our kings delay
 breaking till they are dead ; it would be
 much better for them and the state
 to break in their life-time. When a ma-
 chine is so worn that it cannot go as it
 should, it must be stopped : to force it in-
 to a motion, for which it is no longer fit,
 is only wearing out its springs more and
 more.

Here

Here is Lewis the Fifteenth, who is so hard put to it, that he is now * spending the income assigned for his subsistence in the year 1764. He has anticipated his own life: he has eaten up himself before the time, so that one may say he is provisionally dead. Would it not be better for him to lay the state of his affairs before his people, than stay till the terrible increase of the disorder of his affairs reduces him to a remedy, which the state will be too weak to bear the application of? It is said, in excuse, that the government will lose its credit: but will it not be much more lost when this prince shall have ruined himself irretrievably, and both state and people be involved in his ruin?

I could wish, continued he, that there was every ten years a review of the state of the monarchy, when all its debts should be liquidated. This indeed might, sometimes, require violent remedies; yet these would never do so much mischief as this silent file of the public debts, which insensibly wears away the government, and reduces it to such a calamitous state, that at length the very remedies become a disease.

N 3

But

* In 1762.

But shall I frankly tell you the real source of this disorder? It is not owing to our kings, who generally know nothing of business, and are, of all others, the last informed of what is doing in the kingdom. The fault lies in those wretches the ministers, whose standing maxim it is, to extract the prince's opulence out of indigence. They, as it were, put the monarchy in a press, squeezing out all the juice they can; and then, say they, see whether France wants funds. This it is to have genius and understanding. Indeed, a patriotic minister would never have thought of this; they must be of a flinty, cruel cast, strangers to all goodness, who can employ their talents in striking out such oppressions.

LETTER CX.

The Same, to the Same, at Peking.

Paris.

THERE is a time of the year when the Christians fall away strangely, their pagod allowing them only one meal a day, and that must be of light foods,
as

as herbs and fish: flesh they must not touch, unless they buy a licence for it from the pope, who, even in this appointed season of mortifications, can sell them full power to gratify their appetite.

It is a general penitence preparatory to the public mourning of the nation for the death of Christ. That day, called Good Friday, is devoted to sorrow: but it may more properly be called *Wicked Friday*, since men, according to what Christians themselves say, committed on that day the most horrid of all impieties, putting the Author of Life to death. There is not a man of any fashion who does not wear black on this day, and shews, in a ridiculous manner, his grief for that sad event.

But, if they eat little in this season of abstinence, they make themselves amends by diversions: besides other shows, all the playhouses are open, and more crowded than at other times.

The more Christian morality is brought to the test, the less consistent it is found.

LETTER CXI.

*The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin
Cham-pi-pi, at Paris.*

Naples.

THE religion at Naples is quite in the Italian way; I mean full of show, superstition, and ridiculous miracles. They have here some of Christ's mother's milk, which liquefies every year on the day of her festival; some of St. Januarius's blood, which boils up when it is wanted so to do; also that of a saint, called John the Baptist, which occasionally does the like; crucifixes, which have spoken, and which are ready to speak again, whenever they have a mind to it; canvas images, which have opened their mouths and expressed themselves as distinctly as reasonable creatures.

Thou must think, that a people, giving credit to so many prodigies, do not believe the greatest of all, which is, the existence of the Supreme Being: and so it is; the greater part here, of those
who

who swallow these miracles, do not believe in God.

Were the Neapolitans to form a paradise, they would give the first place to the virgin's milk; the blood of St. Januarius would have the second; and, perhaps, God might come in for the third. The Romans had worked in this city, for the embellishment of the Christian churches, long before Jesus Christ came into the world: the magnificence of the true God has been raised from the ruins of that of idols, and Christian humility has decked itself out in pagan parade and vanity.

As God's house at Naples is extremely magnificent, so the tombs rival its stateliness. The bones of the dead are very grandly lodged; some corpses here have mansions three or four stories high: King Robert, especially, lies like a king.

Though no tombs are to be erected for Christians who do not believe in the mass; yet they shew you, with an air of great gravity, those of the antients who did not believe in God.

LETTER CXII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at Pekin.

Paris.

I Have mentioned to thee the clubs in this capital, but without saying anything of their police, and form of government, which, like that of states, is three-fold.

The first is despotic, being under a sultan invested with an absolute power: he orders, and the subject pays him immediate obedience: he is the supreme law, and any will of his is a command.

It is said, that, in order to attain the turban of the despotic club, a member must have long devoted himself to the whimsies of the female members, must have gone through an uneasy servitude under their freaks and caprices; for there is no being master here, without having been a slave.

The second form is monarchical. This has a kind of king, who is the soul of the club: he regulates the diversions of the whole society; he appoints and superintends

perintends balls, plays, and parties of pleasure; makes matches; and all intrigues are carried on with his privity: he forbids playing deep, checks large expences, dictates the modes of dress, takes cognizance of domestic affairs, reconciles husbands to their wives, advises young women against their follies, and reproves the coquetries of the elder.

The third is the republican. Here the subjects are quite free and independent of each other; their sole business is to censure the government: this has few or no women; for they prefer being under a despot, or a king, to a liberty that consists only in satyrizing the state. Politicians say, that the institution of this club is originally English, as plainly appears, besides its freedom, from the drinking, and especially from the smoking lately introduced.

LETTER CXIII.

The Same to the Same, at Peking.

Paris.

THE other day the chevalier called on me in the forenoon to go and take a walk in the Palais-Royal. After a turn or two we sat down in a very fine arbour made by nature, and curiously embellished by art. Our situation enabled us to see all the figures of this moving picture: so that, if any objects struck me, it was only speaking; for the chevalier, having lived thirty years in the great walk, knows all the company.

Sir, said I, to my companion, pray, who is that tall ambulatory skeleton walking by himself? never did I see a living man more like a corpse! That walking shadow, said he, is a foreign minister: his business at the court of France is a gaming negotiation; for, in Europe, gaming is grown to be a state-affair. This minister regularly holds his conferences, which may literally be called sessions. He is said to have a great share of
that

that political sagacity which accounts for, and calculates the events at chance. Never was any public agent known to be better versed in the relations, powers, and managements, of the four kings.

He is reckoned the most able minister in Europe for deciding a refined stroke: at Picquet, he is called the ornament of the grave; but, however he may decorate a tomb, he strips many a pocket; he has not his equal as a cut-purse.

His negotiations in France have not been fruitless; his address in that branch of politics, which dexterous players find at their fingers ends, has procured him a million of livres.

And who, added I to the chevalier, is that other man, who is just come up to him? That is the baron de V——, another gaming negotiator; but not in the ministry; he has made the sword his choice: however, in the manual-policy I have been speaking of, he is not at all inferior to the foreign agent.

The conferences, or sessions, held by this second negotiator, must be of consequence; for he spends very high, keeps opera-girls; and you see how richly he is dressed; his house is fit for a prince, besides

fides open table, and an equipage of a piece with the rest; the whole at the expence of those to whom it may appertain.

There's a third making up to them; does he also belong to the court of the four kings? Yes, and finds his account in it: he is the baron St. S—, and, having been banished Paris, comes here only at times by the minister's leave; so that he endeavours to make the most of the short intervals allowed him.

What, more sharpeners! cried the chevalier, seeing a man coming into the walk, as if they had agreed to meet to be reviewed by us. This creature, says he, pointing to a man of a very ordinary appearance, is colonel Sorm—, an Italian: his being here is not owing to him; the head of the police was going to clap him up in Bicetre for life, when a prince of the blood gave him an exclusive privilege to sharpen in the Temple*.

* A privileged place in Paris.

LETTER CXIV.

The Same, to the Same, at Peking.

Paris.

I Am now on the point of leaving Paris. There are still many things on which I might write to you ; for a city assuming a new form every day, and, as it were, made up again every four and twenty hours, continually offers fresh matter for reflection.

I may not have fully answered the expectations of our court relatively to France ; but I have done the utmost. There are in every nation a multitude of minute matters, which a foreigner cannot describe : though discernible by the eye, they escape the imagination ; and terms are wanting to express them with any accuracy : he perceives what they are, but is not able to explain them : I fancy they might be called the mechanism of society.

But a traveller would know too much, did he know all. Numbers of these small matters must be left in their insignificance.

This is not the last letter thou shalt receive from me before I embark for England. I have desired Sin-ho-ei to direct
to

to me to Bruffels, where I shall spend some days.

LETTER CXV.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, at Paris.

NAPLES, of all countries, is the most remote from learning. The sciences must certainly lie at an infinite distance.

The brains of the Neapolitans are quite stuffed with sounds; music here is the supreme qualification. This people are perpetually quavering and humming tunes. The most famous academies here are repositories of music, where even familiar colloquy is a kind of singing, and all the experiments turn on harmony.

The most skilful of its professors are eunuchs. He, who would distinguish himself in this human science, must be deprived of the great characteristic of humanity, and, for the sake of pleasing other men, cease to be a man. Barbarity itself is called in for charming the senses, and unnatural

natural cruelties are practised to heighten the frivolous delights.

Think not that it is the climate which hinders any great progress in the sciences: compositions, which do the greatest honour to the human mind, have been written in this air. In the Roman times it was the land of literature and knowledge, and, if countenanced by the government, would recover its influence; for the climate in Europe is observed never to do any thing of itself.

The perfection to which this people has carried harmony is a pretty certain indication of the progress it would make in the speculative sciences; but in this they are cramped by many powerful causes; and, whilst these shackles are not taken off, the Neapolitan nation will continue in its present inferiority. Perhaps one of the greatest is monkery; it is not for the interest of an ignorant body of men that the people should know any thing.

LETTER CXVI.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at Peking.

Brussels.

ALL the way from Paris to Brussels does not afford one place worth mentioning; and, instead of men, you scarce meet with any thing but Flemings.

This country is called Austrian Flanders, to distinguish it from another, named French Flanders. That, where I am at present, belongs to the house of Austria; the principal dominions of which lie two or three hundred leagues from Brussels; so that, should the prince be inclined to see his Flemish subjects, he must ask half a dozen sovereigns leave.

It is a very good country, but peace ruins it: war is its harvest; and France does all it can to keep it perpetually rich, usually making it the theatre of sieges and battles.

Every ten years, nations must meet in Flanders, to cut each other's throats, or the inhabitants would starve: this is owing

ing to the great plenty of provisions, and the scarcity of money. The Fleming, in general, is a dull heavy creature, void of imagination; a kind of animal-machine, acting by habit: he does to-day what he did yesterday, and will do to-morrow what he does to-day: his chief food is milk and butter; which occasions a jest, that, if there were no cows, there would be no Flemings.

They have long been aiming at wit, and perhaps might have reached it had they any genius.

The national religion is that of the pope. These people have the same worship, the same ceremonies, as Rome, and with the like superstition. They venerate Christ, and worship the saints.

The Low Countries would have a numerous nobility, had not a duke formerly put a great part of them to death; they died in defence of their liberty, which was dearer to them than life. The present Flemings, like all the other European people, are habituated to the yoke of servitude. Indeed they still stand up for their privileges; but these only add to their slavery.

There

There seems a set agreement between this people and the court of Vienna, which is, that the latter is welcome to their money, but must not lay a finger on their antient privileges.

Though the Flemings have not the least concern in the northern war, yet are they drained in support of it. The sums remitted by them into Germany are not easily calculated; at least, they are such as would suffice to make a state very flourishing.

LETTER CXVII.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Superintendent of Religion at Pekin.

Brussels.

ILately was witness to a very horrible fight here; nothing less than Christ himself made a prisoner. Twenty soldiers, with their bayonets fixed at the end of their pieces, were carrying him to a sick person; the mandarin of the parochial pagod having flatly refused to carry him. I must let you into the cause of the God of the Christians being thus imprisoned,
and

and why the soldiery is, at present, made a part of this sect's hierarchy.

About half a century ago, some differences arising between the Christians, on certain points of their religion, the pope sent an ordinance, enjoining them to believe some articles of faith, of which they were not convinced: this mandate was called the Constitution. Mandarins, bonzes, men and women, all were obliged to sign what they did not understand, and, what is worse, what they were not persuaded of. They who would not act against their conscience were stript of their substance, and excommunicated from society. This remedy only heightened the distemper; and the Constitution, which was supposed to be pregnant with peace and concord, spread the flame of animosity, and both parties became more rancorous against each other than ever.

The Christian Alcoran was often brought on the carpet, but with this difficulty, that they, who were for explaining it to others, did not themselves understand it. Now this was not the way to come to an agreement; and accordingly they did not agree. Besides innumerable bickerings, several pitched battles were fought, and the chief weapons

weapons on both sides, were the writings of the primitive fathers, as the philosophers of this Alcoran are called.

But the victory of one party rather the more increased the strength of the other : the longer they disputed, the more they varied ; and both sides made use of such subtilties, that amidst their logical refinements they no longer understood one another, yet still flamed with all their former animosity.

One party however got the superiority ; Rome and the court bribed it to sell its faith for emoluments and honours. They who had put their names to the Constitution formed a plot against the recusants. The subscribing mandarin bishops forbid the subaltern priests to administer certain rites to the sick, under pretence that *things sacred are not to be given to dogs*. Christ's body was not to be given to them in their last moments, without a note certifying that they were good Constitutionists. The parliament of Paris, which apprehends every thing to be under its cognizance, interfered, and banished the refractory mandarins ; but to little effect ; the refusals to administer rather increased ; so that, in many cases, a force was put on the re-

cusant priests, and they were even compelled by a party of soldiers to carry Christ's body to the sick.

LETTER CXVIII.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, at Bruffels.

Naples.

THE king of Naples has lately left his old subjects, to go and govern others; for I must acquaint thee, that in Europe the sovereigns have no particular family. They are ever ready to be the sovereign of that people who is the most opulent and powerful. The father of the national family, void of all sentiment towards his people, but that of interest, leaves them when a greater domain offers itself elsewhere.

Crowns, in this part of the world, are a matter of barter: the European princes fight, negotiate, treat, and exchange, with a view of getting the richest.

This traffic of crowns cools the affection of subjects towards their sovereign; and how indeed can they have any hearty attachment

tachment to a prince, who is no longer theirs, than whilst no political revolutions call him to a more splendid regality? The king of Naples, before his departure for Spain, made a very mortifying avowal: he declared to all Europe, that his eldest son was an idiot, and consequently incapable of reigning; and transferred the crown, which he was quitting, to another of his children: thus, though sovereigns, by their rank, are superior to the very greatest personages of the state, yet the laws of politics sometimes reduce them to acknowledgements, which often debase them beneath the common class of men; and this is no small abatement in grandeur.

L E T T E R CXIX.

The Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, to the Mandarin Kie-tou-na, at Peking.

Brussels.

TH E day after my arrival at Brussels, I went to pay my respects to prince Charles of Lorraine: it is an honour he allows to almost every foreigner who passes

passes through this city. He is governor of the Low Countries; that is, he has a commission from the court of Vienna to be sovereign in its stead; and this commission he in effect transfers to a minister, who rules for him; for, in Europe, there are nations who may be said to be governed at the third hand.

This prince is of most easy access, and all affability; the vanity of self-love is pleased at approaching him; his condescension totally removes the infinite distance from his grandeur to the mediocrity of a private person, and, in some measure, restores the primitive equality.

What goodness any of the great men in Europe have, is only the effect of education; whereas in this prince it is natural. He prevents the cries of distress; every day of his life is stamped with some signal act of munificence. Were all mankind like prince Charles, half the sorrows, and all the vices, of human nature would be at an end.

From his highness I went to his minister, count C——: What a difference between the master and servant! The latter appeared to me eaten up with pride: he received me with that medley of politeness

ness and haughtiness which places private persons infinitely below the man in office. He had with him a renegado capuchin, to whom he was dictating an article to be inserted in the Brussels Gazette: after dispatching the apostate monk, I came in play. He asked me several things about the government of China, our trade, our finances, our arts, our skill, &c. &c. but his questions were such as shewed him to be nothing of a statesman.

He rises every morning at four o'clock, to learn to have genius; whatever he alights on he reads; and by this application he is at length become very superficial.

Thou mayest well think that a man who affects great knowledge, is vain, lofty, and assuming: I never saw more arrogance. Every thing must give way to his will; woe to him who should offer to thwart his sentiments! he is the very pacha of the Low-Countries.

LET-

LETTER CXX.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Brussels.

IN those European kingdoms, where nobility must be proved to qualify a person for a seat in assemblies which are not noble, and where he must have his old parchments ready in proof of his sixteen quarterings, the usual entertainment of strangers is the playhouse, as here money equally procures entrance to the noble and plebeian.

I went yesterday to the theatre of this city, where a bad play was acted by bad comedians; however, the house was crowded, and the appearances in the boxes very brilliant. It was my good fortune to sit next to a Frenchman, who, having been settled at Brussels for some time, knew most of the spectators of any figure.

Sir, said I to him, give me leave to ask you a question or two concerning a few of the principal persons around us. He returned me a very complaisant answer.

Pray, who is he in the box next to the prince's, viewing the play through a glass, and making such hideous wry faces? It is, answered he, the prince of Or—. How say you! a prince? That's what none but a conjurer would have guessed; I am sure I should have taken him for something very different: really some of the great have little of their dignity in their appearance.

In the same box, continued I, I perceive something scarce perceivable: it may be a man; but if it be, he is but half made. What is it —? It is the duke of D—. He is very little, replied I. But in what station is that Flemish shrimp? Nothing less than governor of the city. He a governor! replied I with some surprise. Yes, he a governor, added he: do you think him unequal to that post? I will not go so far as that: he may even discharge it with great honour; but, whatever his abilities are, his figure is none of the most promising.

Who is that in this box below, on our left, with a face half an ell long? It is the duke of St. A——, a peer of England. And what is he doing at Brussels? Doing! why, he is running in debt over
head

head and ears. What need was there of his coming over to Bruffels for that? the English nobility, I am told, may do the like at home: probably he here safely enjoys the same privilege? Not so very safely, for his person is threatened. How! said I, arrest a duke? No, but it is said that he will be virtually confined; a guard will be set over him, to have an eye to him wherever he goes.

Pray, who is that fop, ogling yonder a young lady in the front box, with such fantastical airs?

That is Count N——, a name highly esteemed, and whose ancestors have gloriously distinguished themselves in the Imperial service: he is out of character there; he should be in the field; but the degenerate wretch prefers amours to fame.

As the reputation and dignity of a house can be maintained only by hereditary virtue, and a series of worthy actions, his father's death may be said to have terminated the nobility of his family, and the meanness of it to be begun in him.

Can you tell me who that young man is in the second box on the left of the prince's? He is an Englishman, who seems to be here only to do honour to his nation,

on, keeping mistresses, dogs, horses, and running footmen. He has gone such a way to work, as in four years time to bring a fine fortune to nothing: six months more, at the like rate, puts an end to all his splendour, and will send him back to London a mere beggar. The woman next to him, with black eyes and flabby cheeks, is a creature who, I dare say, will draw him in to marry her; for the English never play the fool by halves.

- Who is that tall young man looking through a glass, as if he were a person of consequence, though by his appearance I should rather take him for a valet de chambre? He is a brother of the nuncio, or Pope's ambassador. The coxcomb sets up for a marquis, though his father was only a common tradesman at Milan.

If I am not troublesome in my enquiries, pray who is he that flutters from one lady to another, and takes so much upon him? He is a notary's clerk, whom the French court has thought fit to make its minister here.

One question more, and I have done: who is that person with the blue ribbon on the stage? It is the L—— resident. He, unquestionably, is a nobleman of high rank.

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rank. He would be ; but, unluckily, a little ceremony did not come into his father's mind, when he took his mother to his bed ; he forgot to marry her ; so that the most you can make of him is, that he is a noble bastard.

Really, said I, this court is finely set off with ministers : the best born of them is scarce a commoner.

LETTER CXXI.

The Mandarin Sin-ho-ei, to the Mandarin Cham-pi-pi, at Brussels.

Naples.

THE Neapolitans may be said to live next door to the devils ; a step or two brings you to the infernal regions. A few days since I went to see one of the gates of hell, and the largest of any on earth : the country people call it Vefuvius.

It is a burning mountain, almost continually venting flames and clouds of smoak, so as to darken the sun ; and, besides the danger of being destroyed by the flames, they are no less exposed to be swallowed up by earthquakes, which here
are

are both frequent and violent. In all parts here abysses, smoak, and flames, meet your eyes, besides noxious exhalations, which prove fatal to great numbers of the inhabitants.

The Europeans, as I before observed to thee, are unaccountable in their settlements; some build towns amidst the tempestuous waves, others amidst subterraneous abysses; and whilst the finest tracts of the universe lie desert, climates shunned even by the wild beasts are peopled.

LETTER CXXII.

The Same, to the Same, at Pekin.

Brussels.

THE day following, I went to the play-house at the same hour; and who should be the first man I saw, but he who had so complaisantly satisfied my curiosity the night before? I went up to him, and asking pardon for being so troublesome, renewed my questions.

Be so kind, Sir, as to tell me who is that lady past her bloom, and with no great share of beauty, in the second box,
here

here on our right. It is, answered he, the Countess of Cop——, a German lady, wife to a minister of state: she has something lofty in her look, said I. You need not mince the matter, she is haughty and arrogant—yet she seems to have some mortification heavy on her heart.—Right, an inward vexation preys on her, and she will never get over it: she was for taking place of the first ladies in Brussels, till a duchess wrote to Vienna, and the court decided that a minister's wife should walk after duchesses. This precedence, every body judges, is a death's wound to her; for such a public rebuke to the pride of an imperious assuming woman, is a slow poison, which soon or late carries her to her grave.

Who is that young lady in blue flowered with silver, in one of the front boxes? The princess of Or——, answered he. Is she a princess by birth? No, said he, she purchased that title at the expence of her youth and beauty: some say she paid greatly above its real value; and indeed, to whatever rank a fine woman rises by sacrificing her beauty to an old infirm man, I think it a dear purchase.

Pray

Pray give me some account of that handsome lady in the box on our left. That lady, answered he, is the duchess of A——, a native of France : I know not how it is, said I, but her looks excite two different emotions ; the desires of love subside into the purest respect. And Brussels has not a lady, said he, who better maintains her character. She is possessed of all the female excellencies, without any alloy of their vices : as a woman, she may have her foibles ; but she has them so far under command, that they never break out : which, in that sex, is the grand quality ; for from faults none are free ; but the point is, to conceal them from observation.

And that lady in the box over the stage, turned of forty, with a good face but an indifferent shape—That is the chancellor's lady, and great are her accomplishments, and I may say her learning and genius ; but I wish she would recollect, that it is high time to give over love, when one has a daughter fit to fill her place in that sphere. At Brussels, however, as at Paris, that is what mothers take care never to think of.

If I am not too troublesome, pray inform me who that lady is in the second
box

box on the left over the stage? That's Madam V——. What lovely eyes she has! said I. Yes, replied he, and to those lovely eyes she owes her ruin: prince Charles is said to have brought them under at many a private interview: she belongs to the household; her husband is of the bedchamber to the prince, and she of his bed.

I observe two pretty young ladies in the next box: who may they be? They are two sisters from Liege, come hither in quest of a husband, and cannot so much as get a lover. It seems to be the fate of some beauties, that they shall never be married, or so much as courted.

I give you my word never to trouble you with any more questions; only gratify my curiosity about those two young persons in the second boxes, and between them a woman, old in her person, in her carriage, and in her garb. That lady dowager, answered he, is the relict of a man, who, according to common report, once wore a livery: the two girls are his daughters. The mother has scraped together a vast fortune only by telling money. No-body visits them, and the

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the nobility especially take great pleasure in mortifying them on all occasions.

The girls are not slighted for the meanness of their birth, but because they are rich: however, from the very circumstance which draws such contempt on them, they make light of it; besides, they are soon to be married to two substantial financiers of Paris, who are so prudent as to overlook a livery where there is money.

To-morrow I set out for England, from whence I shall immediately write to you on my arrival.

E N D of V O L. III.



